SANTA-MARIA;

OR, THE

MYSTERIOUS PREGNANCY.

A ROMANCE.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

BY I. FOX.

I have't—it is engender'd.—Hell and night
Muſt bring this monſtrous birth to the world's light.

SHAKSPEARE.

VOL. I.

CORK:

PRINTED BY
J. CONNOR, J. HALY, AND M. HARRIS,
BOOKSELLERS.

1799.

BRITISH MUSEUM

SANTA-MARIA.

CHAPTER I.

All things that we ordained feſtival,
Turn from their office to black funeral:
Our inſtruments to melancholy bells,
Our wedding cheer to a ſad funeral feaſt;
Our ſolemn hymns to ſullen dirges,
Our bridal flow'rs ſerv'd for a bury'd coarſe,
And all things change them to the contrary.

SHAKSPEARE.

THE palace of Rodolph, which for a ſeries of ſome months had been the fair ſpot, and agreeable ſource of every happineſs and pleaſure, was rendered on a ſudden the abode of melancholy and deſpair. The ſunſhine of joy, in one luckleſs moment, hid its ſmiling aſpect, whilſt the dreary forms of grief and horror advanced to change the envied ſcene.

The morning that had been fixed upon for the nuptial celebration of the young Prince Rinaldo with the daughter of his kinſman, Count Rodolph, proved the moſt diſaſtrous day to both theſe noble families that ever was annexed to the fate of human beings;——

For—when the Lady Iſabella repaired to the chamber of her daughter, ſhe was aſtoniſhed at the profound ſilence that reigned throughout the apartment—— With a trembling accent ſhe called on Santa-Maria——No Santa-Maria replied—— The Counteſs on this ran towards her daughter's bed; and, opening the curtains with a fearful ill-boding hand, ſhe diſcovered her offspring claſped within the icy arms of death!!!

Weak would be any attempt of mine, to deſcribe the agony and diſtraction of Iſabella—The pencil, rather than the pen is wanting moſt—For here, the poor mother ſunk lifeleſs on the more lifeleſs body of the ſtill beauteous Santa-Maria ——Beauteous indeed even now.

For—in this cold torpid ſtate, ſhe was lovely, as when motion leaped through her veins—nor, had the roſeate hue of her cheeks or lips loſt their wonted freſhneſs —— She lay extended, like an angel on the bed of ſleep—in whoſe placid brain, nor fallacious dream, nor horrid fancies could interpoſe with reſt.

The palace was almoſt inſtantly raiſed by a ſudden ſhriek that eſcaped the Lady Iſabella, before ſhe dropped inanimate—Prince Rinaldo, attended by his old faithful friend, Manfredi, and a ſplendid ſuite, was waiting at this critical moment with count Rodolph, for his fond and lovely bride.——

Alas! how changeable is the face of fortune!—The deluſive phantom at one inſtant holds to our view the ſpecious glaſs of happineſs and proſperity; on the next, ſhe as ſuddenly veils it with the ſable covering of miſery and diſappointment—then mocking, leaves us—victims to credulity and deſpair.

Count Rodolph, aſtoniſhed at this unexpected and lamentable ſummons, firſt aſcended the ſtairs that led to his daughter's chamber; Prince Rinaldo followed, accompanied by Signior Manfredi—They entered the apartment of death almoſt at the ſame moment—They all approached the bed abreaſt, and——Oh! horror inconceiveable!—beheld the beauteous Santa-Maria---not a bluſhing expecting bride---but a ſtill inanimate corpſe!---

How ſhall I paint the general concern that prevailed at this mournful ſcene?---

Oh! painful taſk, thus ever and anon, will it be to recount the diſmal tale of woe.

The Lady Iſabella ſtill continued inſenſibly ſtretched upon the body of her lifeleſs child.

Count Rodolph ſtood at ſome little diſtance from the bed---his arms folded in each other, and wrapped beneath his cloke---his eyes at the ſame time ſternly fixed upon the motionleſs features of his daughter---whilſt his heart thus inwardly

arraigned the omniſcient decrees of heaven's ſacred miniſters:---

Providence—(bethought Rodolph)--Providence ſuddenly ſnatched from me Ferdinand, my only ſon—the brave—the illuſtrious heir of my now declining houſe—His unknown fate, however, remains concealed beneath the veil of ſome undiſcovered myſtery—Ferdinand may yet exiſt ---Haply, I beheld not the boy thus ſadly ſtretched upon the dreary couch of death ---If heaven is juſt and merciful, he may be again reſtored---But, here forſooth, all hope is baniſhed---The ſole remaining ſtem of my illuſtrious houſe lies there, a diſmal corpſe---plucked in her very bloom, from the opening nuptial bed, to be tranſplanted in the withering avenues of the dead---Oh! curſed---oh! doubly accurſt be the envious powers, that wrought the dire exchange.

Whilſt the Count was thus arraigning the unſearchable decrees of Providence, Prince Rinaldo, after beſtowing a moſt piercing look of regret on his lovely departed bride, ſo ſuddenly claſped within the chilly arms of death! He raiſed his hand and eyes to Heaven; then piouſly, patiently exclaimed—God's will be done! As for the good Signior Manfredi, he alſo looked ſilently, poignantly on, whilſt

" The tears ran down his beard, like winter-drops
" From eaves of reeds—" SHAKSP.

CHAPTER II.

Death may uſurp on nature many hours,
And yet the fire of life kindle again
The o'erpreſs'd ſpirits—— SHAKSPEARE.

THE uſual Catholic ceremonies being performed over the body of Santa Maria, the laſt mournful duty now approached—the family adieu—the living, meeting to take the dreadful and mortal farewel of the dead. Both Rinaldo and the Count refuſed to participate in this awful ceremony. The Lady Iſabella poſſeſſed greater fortitude—With the moſt poignant maternal fondneſs, ſhe approached her dearly beloved daughter's remains, to take the parting kiſs——Trembling ſhe ſtood, e'er nature would allow it; her body, half reclined, remained ſuſpended betwixt the alternate balance of grief and affection—A mother's fondneſs at length prepondered—and—ſolemnly ſhe ſtooped to preſs her daughter's death-cloſed lips to her's ——but—Oh God!—Oh gracious God!—what were her feelings?—What were her ſenſations?—Deſcription can ſcarce obey the happy ſummons—It muſt—it muſt come forth—

For, here, the mother—Oh thrilling tranſport!—diſcerned reſpiration in the mutual contact—a bleſt---a ſenſible reanimation ran through her whole frame. The ſtern demeanour of fortitude now

gave way to the ſofteſt features of maternal ecſtaſy; joys unutterable ſucceeded the black proſpect of deſpair; whilſt the happy mother, in the overgrown greatneſs of her bliſs, fell again inſenſible in the arms of her domeſtics—not, as heretofore, the poor victim of diſtraction——No—ſhe fell drooping, like the poor agonized criminal, who after having been ſtretched upon the horrid wheel, ready to receive the executioner's uplifted tremendous blow, hears the unexpected welcome reſpite, and who, overpowered with the joyous tidings, ſinks ſtill deeper beneath the irreſiſtible influx of happineſs.

The tumultuous ſounds of tranſport and ſurpriſe in Santa-Maria's chamber, inſtantly caught the attention of Rodolph; who was ſitting diſconſolately in his own adjoining apartment, brooding over his cares and diſappointments. The loſs of his only daughter was not, *then*, ſo much the ſubject of his gloomy meditations, as the loſt proſpect of his glowing ambition. On hearing the noiſes, however, at hand, he ſtarted from his chair---and with knitted brows—arms folded—and a ſtern ſtep, he entered the chamber.

Whilſt the fierce Neapolitan's eager enquiring eye looked round for explanation; Sylvia pointed to the bed, and tumultuouſly exclaimed—" See—ſee—my lord

—our Santa-Maria—our Lady Santa-Maria lives—ſhe lives to bleſs us all again!"

The Count ſtood thunderſtruck—he gazed towards the bed—and gazing—gave the lie to every ſenſe he had.

During this ſolemn interval, the Counteſs recovered, and Santa-Maria again rolled her eyes within their ſplendid orbs. —With light—came reaſon—ſenſe—perceiving her mother hanging over her with rapture and aſtoniſhment, ſhe obſerved with an angel's ſmile:

"What ails my honoured—dear—be-
"loved parent?"

The Lady Iſabella's feelings were too far ſprung to give the glad reply—the exulting mother could only anſwer with her eyes—ſhe hung over her reſtored child, with the moſt expreſſive ſilence—kiſſed her re-animated lips with ecſtaſy indeſcribable, and preſſed her warm renovated hand to her palpitating boſom.

When the Count became convinced that the ſcene before him was real, the harſhneſs of his features relaxed into paternal ſoftneſs; and whilſt he claſhed his daughter's hand in his, the big tear rolled in his ſombrous eye.

Then, regarding the chamber of death with a look of divided horror and ſatisfaction, he exclaimed:

"Would that my young kinſman---
"the Lord Rinaldo, was now here!"---

At the ſound of *Rinaldo's* name, Santa-

Maria faintly exclaimed ——— " How " does my dear young lord?---I dreamt, " my mother, that I was ſhortly to call " him huſband.——Oh! my lady---I have " had ſuch dreadful---and ſuch pleaſing " dreams alſo. Methought, the younger " Contarini had by ſome infernal unknown " means, conveyed a deadly poiſon to the " lips of Lord Rinaldo; and forced me " afterwards to receive his loathed em- " brace. And then, anon, I thought my " noble brother, Ferdinand, ruſhed im- " petuous to my aid, with a bloody faul- " chion raiſed o'er his head, whilſt with " a voice like thunder, he exclaimed---- " *Fear not, Santa-Maria, Ferdinand ſtill* " *lives---Ferdinand ſhall guard thee from* " *oppreſſion and injuſtice.*"

" On this, *methought, he levelled Conia-* " *rini with the duſt.*"

Rodolph, all this time, was alternately abſorbed in anxiety and pleaſure---he turned pale with the recurrence of paſt circumſtances---ſtarted and looked wild---then on a ſudden, with a mixture of grinning---(if I may be allowed the expreſſion)---and ſenſations---half pleaſant---half moroſe---he took his daughter's viſion to be a good omen of his ſon's preſent exiſtence, and future reſtoration. This happy--foreboding preſage, united to Santa-Maria's recovery, repelled his wonted gloom; and he once more beheld, with ambitious joy, the proud towers of Mar-

torano caſtle riſing majeſtically to his view.

Theſe ſudden and affecting viciſſitudes of fortune had ſo wrought upon Rodolph ----the Counteſs---and every one around them, that they all ſurveyed the apartment wherein they had aſſembled with an unconſcious and careleſs eye. No one at the moment reflected that they ſtood in the dreary chamber of death---encircled on every ſide with the mournful perapher-nalia of an approaching funeral; and that the living Santa-Maria lay ſhrouded in the awful apparel of the dead.

When reaſon, however, began to re-aſſume her wonted vigour, the beauteous Neapolitan looked about her with terror and aſtoniſhment---- then raiſing herſelf upon the bed, ſhe exclaimed——

" Am I awake---or do I dream? What
" means this winding ſheet, that's wrap-
" ped about my body thus? Oh! what
" would that coffin there, whoſe wide
" extended jaw ſeems ready to receive
" ſome helpleſs corpſe? Why is this ſa-
" ble pall ſtretched thus acroſs my bed?
" And why theſe dreary hangings, that
" diffuſe a gloom ſo horrible around my
" chamber? Oh! my mother---ſay---
" whither tend theſe palling ſigns of
" death? Alas! I dreamed my wedding
" was at hand, and not my funeral.----
" What mean thoſe doubtful looks----
" thoſe tears and ſmiles alternate——I

" grow faint, my mother---I ſeem ſick at " heart---I am---I————" On this, the lovely roſe drooped once more cheerleſs on her death-clad pillow.

The palace of Rodolph was again plunged in a ſeries of grief and conſternation. Lady Iſabella, who began to arraign her diſcretion, for not removing Santa-Maria on the firſt indiſtinct dawnings of returning reaſon, now begged the Count precipitately to retire, whilſt ſhe could have her daughter removed to another chamber. In the mean time, my lord—(exclaimed the agitated mother)—ſee that the Signior Baſſano be inſtantly ſent for, to afford our daughter all the aſſiſtance he can give.

Rodolph having immediately communicated this order, and a ſeparate one alſo to the Lord Rinaldo, by Droſi—(his favourite domeſtic)—he went in inſtant ſearch of Baſſano, and ſoon ſent him forward to the palace.—He then proceeded to that of the Prince—the young lord was abſent, but happily his friend was found.

Manfredi being haſtily made acquainted with Droſi's happy errand, he as haſtily conducted him to Rinaldo; who was then ſitting in his gardens, beneath the rough branches of an aged hawthorn, on whoſe old trunk he had reclined his deſpondent head.

In the mean time, Santa-Maria was removed to another apartment, and after the

phyſician Baſſano had retired, the Counteſs thus briefly related to her daughter what had paſſed in the dreadful interval of the laſt three days.

I need not deſcribe, ſaid the Lady Iſabella, the poignancy of a fond mother's diſtreſſed feelings, at this mournful criſis. Providence, doubtleſs, for ſome ſupreme and allwiſe deſign, ſunk you thus deeply into the entranced abyſs of death—reſembling ſleep——Either to make trial of our patience, or to harden us, with this ſecond ſevere leſſon of adverſity, againſt ſome future concealed calamity.

On the night, my child, of your ſuppoſed death, two Carthuſian friars ſaid maſs over your ſleeping body.—I occaſionally mingled in their holy oriſons. The Count, your father, retired, alone, overwhelmed with gloomy horrors, to his chamber. On the ſucceeding day, Sylvia undertook the mournful office of preparing your body for the ſilent and dreary encloſure of the tomb. Death, however, on this awful occaſion, ſeemed to advance with rapid ſtrides to ſeize a ſecond prey; for whilſt the blooming roſe ſtill gliſtened, my child, on *your* cheek, the pale lilly had planted its ſilver hue over the fair countenance of the affectionate—youthful Sylvia.

Alas!—my—poor—dear—dear—Sylvia! (ejaculated Santa-Maria.)

On the firſt dawn of returning reaſon (continued the lady Iſabella)—you told us

of your dreams.—Attentive to your voice —your looks—and actions—I obſerved not the dreary appendage of death, that every where ſurrounded us.—My overſight had nearly coſt me dearly; for no ſooner had your intellectual powers began to grow ſtrong and ſtronger, than they were ſeverely wounded with the mournful ſpectacle of all thoſe ſable accoutrements for the grave.—In that ſecond interval, however (—concluded the counteſs—) of loſt reaſon, my child—now---my only child---was conducted hither, and again happily breathes, moves, ſpeaks, and lives to make me once more---a happy mother.

Scarce had theſe happy tidings diffuſed the firſt tranſports of joy and tenderneſs, when the Count entered, followed by his young kinſman, and his guardian, Manfredi.

Santa-Maria momentarily perceiving the violence of her lover's indeſcribable happineſs, diſengaged her hand from thoſe of her mother, and ſtretched it forth to Rinaldo---The young prince kiſſed the rapturous gift with the moſt enthuſiaſtic bliſs; and nature, coming bounteouſly to his aid, he ſhowered down the plenteous ſtream of tearful ecſtaſy on the dearly beloved boon.

Reader!---if thou haſt ever ſeen an honoured parent---an adored wife---a tender huſband----affectionate brother----ſiſter---kinſman---ſtretched upon the ſuppoſed bed of death---and---then---(Oh! tumultuous

bliſs)---beheld them, either by the gracious interpoſition of Providence, or the efforts of human ſkill, unexpectedly reſcued from his icy graſp---If thou ever haſt ſeen thy deareſt boſom friend topping headlong into the dreary receſs of the grave; and then beheld him riſe ſuperior to his preſent powers, you beſt, and, only beſt can tell, what the Lord Rinaldo, and the happy parents of the reſtored Santa-Maria could feel at theſe overjoyous moments!!!

CHAPTER III.

———My mind miſgives
Some conſequence yet hanging in the ſtars.
SHAKSPEARE.

THUS happineſs once more eclipſed the frowns of diſappointment—ſorrow——and deſpair———Diſappointment—ſorrow—and deſpair, however, ſoon puſhed their fair predeceſſor from her too welcome ſeat, and again as unhappily re-aſſumed their jealous angry aſpects.

For, alas! no ſooner had Santa Maria regained her wonted vigour and cheerfulneſs, than the Lord Rinaldo, overcome by his late grief—the cold damps of the nocturnal air—(he having obſtinately refuſed the warm ſhelter of his princely roof, whilſt his dear bride laid dormant upon the fancied bed of death)—and the exquiſite keen-

neſs of his anguiſh, fell into all the agonies and diſtraction that attend the progreſs of a violent fever.

This was the period (melancholy as it proved) that afforded Manfredi the generous opportunity of manifeſting his love, friendſhip, and attachment, for the young lord Rinaldo.—Every hour—every moment ſurveyed his attention and anxiety.—His eyes had rigorouſly eſtranged themſelves from ſleep—he was the watchful adminiſterer of every *medicine* that touched the *lips* of his young patient; for though Manfredi did not carry on his ſhoulder that ſlaviſh national badge of his countrymen—the hideous monſter ſuperſtition—nay, nor is it to be *ſuppoſed*, he now contemplated on thoſe words which had ſo lately ſprung from the viſion of Santa-Maria——"Me-"thought the hated Contarini had, by "ſome infernal unknown means, convey-"ed a deadly poiſon to the lips of Lord "Rinaldo."—Still—what?—he may have had ſome fatal hiſtory as fatally engraved in the deep receſſes of his honeſt heart—known there alone—unſearchable—undivided. Contarini's name and character have been but ſlightly touched upon, in this humble page. Surmiſe may ſpread her broad expanded wings—may ſoar—may flutter—and then may—droop—may—aye, may, at laſt, fall feebly as the air-blown goſſimer. Somewhat of this *hereafter*—things MAY come out, *perhaps* to

chill, to make the ſenſitive ſoul thrill with horror, to make the very hair ſtand perched on its native habitual rooſt, where ſo long it had lain recumbent. Manfredi knew much, aye, more than we can be enabled now to tell. The dreadful ſecret is encloſed deeply, and now myſteriouſly within his own faithful boſom. Let attention, therefore, accompanied by her meek-eyed ſiſter, patience, look up to expectation, whilſt virtue and pleaſure proceed, with fairy steps, to ſing the praiſes of Manfredi.

Manfredi was the only ſon of a Neapolitan officer; who, though rich in courage and virtue, was nevertheleſs poor in purſe and preferment. The brave ſoldier had, however, means ſufficient to bring up his darling ſon to the highest pitch of univerſal knowledge; and had there been a few steps farther to the temple of ſcience, Manfredi would eaſily have overtopped them. He had been the very first in Naples that led the way to accompliſhments of every complexion—equally alike—as a ſcholar—-a poet—-historian—-muſician—painter—and ſculptor. Theſe combined and happy excellencies were alſo tranſlated to the LATE PRINCE and his preſent ſon and heir—Rinaldo—to whoſe guardianſhip and protectorſhip he was PREFERRED, by his old friend, to his *brother*, the preſent COUNT RODOLPH.

Nor was Manfredi leſs aſſiduous in the improvement of the Lady Santa-Maria, omitting no opportunity whatever to inſtruct her pliant mind, giving her leſſons, alike, of worldly and religious knowledge, and, at all times (the hours of piety and devotion apart) making her perfect miſtreſs of the muſes, the pencil, and the heaven-ſounding-lute. In ſhort, Manfredi was

In voices well divulg'd; free, learn'd, and valiant.
SHAKSPEARE.

CHAPTER IV.

A thouſand moral paintings I can ſhow,
That ſhall demonſtrate theſe quick blows of fortune
More poignantly than words. SHAKSPEARE.

FROM the attention, vigilance, and medicinal knowledge of Manfredi, Lord Rinaldo's fever and delirium had conſiderably abated. His guardian, however, for reaſons known only within his own boſom, wiſhed him—moſt anxiouſly wiſhed him—to be removed to his caſtle, in the South. This ſame caſtle was ſecure—impregnable—was..... But more of that hereafter..... Manfredi, in ſhort, wiſhed him to be ſafe there—and there alone—and was determined ſpeedily to effect what he ſo eagerly and myſteriouſly deſired.

The palace of Rinaldo had been daily viſited by his kindred, ſince his ſevere and ſudden illneſs. It was their cuſtom early

ſo to do. On the morning that Manfredi had plotted his clandeſtine departure from Naples to Calabria, he watched the countenance of Rodolph with an anxious vigilance; ſo much ſo, that it might ſeem like ſuſpicion, to a guilty mind. The Count, however, maintained his cuſtomary looks and deportment, and though it was ſeldom that his features had relaxed into a ſmile, ſince the ſudden abſence of his ſon Ferdinand, they aſſumed one, nevertheleſs, when he entered Rinaldo's chamber and diſcovered the happy change that had taken place, ſince his yeſterday's viſit.

If the hardened feelings of Rodolph could thus for a moment ſoften, and change their churliſh rugged nature—Oh! what muſt have been the delicious ſenſations of Santa-Maria, when, in an after-viſit, ſhe entered her lover's apartment, and beheld the roſeate hue of health once more returning on his manly cheek, and the animating ſparkle once more gliſtening in his commanding eye!

The moment Lady Santa-Maria had approached the ſide of her dear Rinaldo's bed, he fondly claſped her hand, and attempted to expreſs all the raptures that he felt on that inſtant, but in a voice ſo feeble, as gave cauſe for Manfredi to enjoin a prudent ſilence, at this—their preſent happy interview.

Diſcourſe, therefore (at his behest) gave way to ſilent looks of mutual and expreſſive tenderneſs. To words ſucceeded—glances of joy—love—tranſport—and innocence.

Manfredi, struck with this exquiſite and affecting picture, instantly caught up his pencil, and, with that enthuſiaſm ſo natural to his genius and inclination, gave a ſecond life to the ſcene and character before him.

Just as the artist had finiſhed his ſketch, prudence and modesty whiſpered to Santa-Maria, that ſhe ſhould procraſtinate her viſit no longer. She therefore took a fond adieu of Rinaldo; and, after Manfredi had ſeated old Paul, in his own chair, by the bed-ſide, he attended her to the ſaloon.

" Fairest young lady!" ſaid Manfredi, halting for a few moments in the ſaloon, " how diſtreſſing are the changes of our flitting existence!—at one moment blooming in full vigour, and on the next fast falling to the grave!—See what Lord Rinaldo was a few days past!"—*(Drawing a ſmall portrait from his ſable pouch.)*—" Behold!—what animation glistens in his eye—what health runs through every feature!—What command—what virtue—what benevolence, ſparkle in his noble countenance!—Now, look at this!—*(Producing another portrait.)*—View—what a melancholy change is there!—Behold!

how your lover, but the next ſucceeding morn, is altered by the wasting arm of ſickneſs!—His bright eyes are ſunk—his cheeks are pallid—his lips parched—his ſtrength exhausted—and all his former vigour and beauty, in a few moments, eclipſed by diſeaſe. Theſe ſad viciſſitudes of fate will long be wholeſome leſſons to you both—will teach ye, as ever and anon you gaze upon them, to conſider life as the ſhort road to a happy eternity.

What is man's life?—Fifteen years or ſo—
Not more, ev'n if his coffin bears the ſtamp
Of good old age.—Compute his infant years—
The time he lies entomb'd in Morpheus' arms!—
There ſpeds at once the moiety of life:—
For what is ſleep, but death reſembled,
A pleaſing midway on Life's ſhort road,
Where each poor trav'ller, burthen'd and fatigu'd,
With pleaſure takes a ſhort refreſhing nap,
Then ſwiftly hies him on his journey's end?—
Next comes ſickneſs—man's laſt forgetful ſtate:
His corp'ral faculties abſorb'd in pain,
The ſeat of Mem'ry extinct and torpid lies.
Then Death envoys him on his dreary way,
And folds the door—on Recollection!

"My poetry, I fear, is as deficient as my paintings. Accept them, however, my dearest pupil, from the unſkilful hand that deſigned them. You will live long, I hope, to watch over your beloved Rinaldo.—*My* anxious watchings, however, ſoon muſt ceaſe; for the natural decay of life cannot long preſerve me from that fate, which, ſoon or late, muſt be our univerſal doom. Take the contraſted portraits, my

child, and carefully preſerve them!—They are the deareſt leſſons that your friend can beſtow upon you."

Santa-Maria accepted the pictures—ſcarcely knowing that ſhe did ſo. Her feelings, however, were re-animated when Manfredi pronounced,

"My beauteous child, adieu!"

"Adieu!—Not ſo, I hope, my deareſt friend!—I ſhall ſee you ſhortly again—ſhall I not?"

"You ſhall, my child, (for ſuch I muſt ever call you;) but, for the preſent, adieu!"

"Then for the preſent, replied Santa-Maria, with a tearful eye and faltering accent, "my deareſt *father*, (for ſuch, *alſo*, I muſt ever call you)—adieu—adieu—adieu!!!"

On this Santa-Maria left the ſaloon, and joining Sylvia, who was waiting for her without, ſhe reluctantly—deſpondently quitted her dear lord's manſion, poſſeſſed with a trembling and diſtreſſing anxiety, that ſhe had never felt ſo poignantly before.

This *was* an adieu—an unexpected—a melancholy adieu, to all;—for, on that night, Manfredi, accompanied by the prince's favourite domeſtics—old Paul, *the moſt faithful old Paul*; Baptiſt, Ignatius, and Pietro, ſecretly conveyed Rinaldo to his tartana, and, coaſting along the ſhore, ſafely lodged him at his ſtrong caſtle in the South.

That the Count and his family, however, ſhould not think that inſult was wantonly intended, as a ſucceſſor to this ſecret meaſure, Manfredi left a letter behind, previous to his departure from the palace (apologizing for the ſudden abſence of Rinaldo —from the danger of a relapſe—and the neceſſity of enjoying a freer air than Naples could afford, &c.) with the ſtricteſt injunction alſo, that it ſhould be delivered early to Rodolph, to prevent his experiencing the diſappointment which muſt have naturally followed, if he had called in the morning at the palace of his nephew.

When the letter was delivered to the Count, Lady Iſabella and her daughter were walking to and fro' with him in the gallery. After he had peruſed it, Rodolph threw it with the utmoſt vehemence on the ground, and then uttering the moſt horrid imprecation that could poſſibly eſcape the lips of a man againſt the virtuous Manfredi, he flew, full of apparent ſpleen and diſappointment, to his own chamber — His rage was exceſſive.—The Counteſs immediately took up the letter, and read it to her daughter.—When ſhe had finiſhed the ſcroll, Lady Iſabella involuntarily exclaimed, " I am glad of it!"

" For why?—For why? my deareſt mother?" uttered Santa-Maria.

" Becauſe ——"

" Becauſe what?"

" Becauſe, my child, anſwered the

counteſs, "I think that my Lord Rinaldo is more likely to recover his health in the country, than he is in the city of Naples!"

CHAPTER V.

If I know more of any man alive
Than that which maiden modeſty doth warrant,
Let all my ſins lack mercy!—Oh! my father,
Prove you that any man with me convers'd,
Refuſe me, hate me, torture me to death!

My chaſtity's the jewel of our houſe,
Bequeathed down from many anceſtors;
Which were the greateſt obloquy i' th' world
For me to loſe.

SHAKSPEARE.

COUNT Rodolph received weekly expreſſes from Manfredi, in Calabria. On the ſixth, however, of his departure from Naples, the whole family were elated with the happy intelligence, that Lord Rinaldo had nearly recovered his former health, ſtrength, and ſpirits; that he burned to ſee his Santa-Maria again, and anxiouſly preſſed a ſpeedy conſummation of their nuptials . . . . . at the Caſtle!!!

But, how alterable are the decrees of Fate!—how ſtrange and inconſtant are the fortunes we are heirs to!—for, the next day after the arrival of the laſt courier, Santa-Maria was ſeized with the moſt violent agonies and continual faintings:—her body was ſwelled, and her beauteous

countenance became again pale, languid, and ſickly. Signior Baſſano being ſent for, he ſoon diſcovered the cauſe—the fatal cauſe, of his fair patient's malady, and, in private with Lady Iſabella and her daughter, he pronounced . . . . . (with the greateſt degree of concern) —THAT SANTA-MARIA—WAS PREGNANT!!!

The Counteſs, on hearing this unexpected declaration, was ſtruck ſpeechleſs —motionleſs—with doubt, horror, and ſurprize. Santa-Maria, however, conſcious of her own innocence, and alarmed by ſuch a falſe ſuggeſtion, with energetic fortitude exclaimed, "that the ſurgeon had belied his conſcience;" and bitterly reproached him, as an intended deſtroyer of her virtue and chaſtity. Baſſano, conceiving himſelf deeply injured, alike in his judgment, candour, and reputation, by theſe reproaches, haſtily left the apartment. In an outer one, however, he was encountered by Rodolph, who anxiouſly ſtopped him, and, with his wonted eagerneſs of enquiry, demanded the nature of his daughter's indiſpoſition. The Surgeon, without the leaſt demur, repeated the cauſe, frankly, as he had done before. The Count was ſtaggered—thunderſtruck; and, perceiving that Baſſano was more inclined to depart than ſtay, he caught him furiouſly by his cloke, and peremptorily commanded him, on his

life, to recall what he had juſt ſaid. The ſurgeon (a man of the firſt ſkill, honor, and integrity, in all Naples) coolly replied—that he could not belie his judgment and his conſcience. "Therefore, truly believe me, my Lord Rodolph," concluded he, with much emphaſis and equal feeling—"your daughter is pregnant!!!"

Upon this, the Count ſuffered Baſſano to depart—ſtaggered, more than ever, at this ſolemn and ſecond aſſurance of his daughter's incontinency.

After Rodolph had recovered, in ſome meaſure, from his aſtoniſhment, he made his way to Santa-Maria's chamber, where he found Iſabella, with her forehead claſped between her hands, and her elbows deſpondently fixed upon her knees.

Santa-Maria, on the contrary, was leaning patiently and reſignedly upon her pillow, feeling more for her mother than for herſelf—When Rodolph, however, burſt into her chamber—with fury in his eye—diſtraction in his looks—and vengeance on his arm, ſhe reſolutely exclaimed, "Advance, my ſire!—Unſheath, at full, that threatening ſword, and bury it in this boſom, if I have acted aught againſt the honor of our houſe!—I perceive, in your angry front, that Baſſano has confirmed what he ſo ſolemnly declared to my honored mother here. Innocent am I, nevertheleſs, as the holy and immaculate

Virgin!——And now (raiſing her hands and eyes to Heaven) I earneſtly conjure my Almighty Creator to ſink me with lightening into the bottomleſs gulph of hell and everlaſting perdition, if my chaſtity is not as bright—as pure—as it was in the very moment that reſpiration firſt iſſued from my lips!"

Rodolph's ſword (notwithſtanding this ſolemn and bitter appeal) was prepared to do the bloody purpoſes of its enraged maſter, when Iſabella interpoſed, and falling on her knees, in motherly anguiſh exclaimed, "Oh! ſpare my child!—Spare—ſpare—my adored—my only daughter!"

"Then let her lips inſtantly proclaim," anſwered the enraged father—"who was the partner of her guilt and infamy!"

"Upon my ſoul, then," warmly replied Santa-Maria, wounded to the very quick by ſuch a baſe ſuggeſtion—"upon all my hopes of future happineſs, I know not of what you queſtion me about!"

"Have patience, Rodolph!" obſerved Iſabella, perceiving that this anſwer had encreaſed his fury and impatience—"have patience, and wait the event for a few days!"

"At your requeſt then, Dame," replied the Count, "it ſhall be ſo. At the expiration, however, of a few days, if this myſtery is not diſcloſed—mark me!—let your daughter there look to it!"—On

this Rodolph disappeared from the chamber, and retired sullenly to his own—there to meditate on the eventful and distressing circumstances of the day.

From the strong and confident assertions of Bassano, a man of unstained repute and integrity, how could the Count think otherwise, than that Santa-Maria must be pregnant?—On the other hand, the solemn declaration that she had so fervently made of her innocence, weakened that of Bassano's.——"The latter's skill might be for once mistaken!—If not (thought Rodolph to himself) she shall die!—Death, or something worse than that—solitude—imprisonment—tortures, shall be her certain doom. Immediate annihilation will be an atonement too merciful for infamy like her's!"

And now—(again bethought the Count) let me indulge one bitter reflection: for it is indeed indulging, if it can lead to vengeance.

Who can be the partner of my daughter's incontinency?

This horrible suggestion led Rodolph into a thousand revolving and intricate perplexities, which had nearly untoned his senses.

Who could be the father?

Who?—Why, no one but the Prince Rinaldo——Santa-Maria would not be so low—so base—and degenerate, as to submit to the embraces of a menial—Blasted

ſuppoſition!—could ſhe, the lawful deſcent of the moſt illuſtrious houſes in Naples, be ſo mean, ſo luſtful—as ſilently to court, in the dead hour of night, ſome ſlaviſh domeſtic to her arms?—Damned be the foul and ignominious thought!—No—no—if ſhe is really pregnant, it muſt be ſo by the young and captivating Prince Rinaldo. Santa-Maria had never liſtened to the addreſſes, nor had ſhe ever been alone (to his knowledge and conſent) with any other man but himſelf——But why ſo eager, when the nuptial ceremony was ſo cloſe at hand? For the preſent, no matter why? Let me for this time (reconſidered the Count) conclude theſe bitter reflections, and await the event, as I have promiſed, for a few days.

The circumſtance of Santa-Maria's ſuppoſed misfortune could not long remain a ſecret, either at home or abroad. The ordinary domeſtics ſoon caught the intelligence; and of courſe, it ſoon reached the public ear. When the Count, therefore, received a mandate from the Viceroy to attend a private council, his court-friends perceiving the gloomy ſuſpence that hung upon his ſable brow, and but too well knowing the cruel cauſe from whence it ſprang, *kindly* condoled with him on his domeſtic misfortune—Condolence, however, like unto this, was excruciating torture—refined cruelty, and

pierced the heart of Rodolph, ſharper than could a thouſand daggers.

The Count, both anxious to avoid this inquiſitorial commiſeration, and to learn the ſubject of the Viceroy's ſummons, preſſed eagerly onward to the preſence-chamber. After being graciouſly received, he was informed of his Excellency, that he had appointed him to the command of a regiment of cavalry, which would ſhortly take the field, in union with the allied Chriſtian powers, againſt the Turks; and which he requeſted of Rodolph immediately to inſpect; to replace all that was deficient both in men and arms—and that he ſhortly afterwards ſhould be re-imburſed by the ſtate.

The Count, by this unexpected inſtance of royal favour, now found his dreary mind more ſurcharged than ever. Here, he reluctantly ſaw himſelf yoked to an inconvenient burthen, which he was ſcarcely able to carry—a load, nevertheleſs, which his duty, as an old commanding officer, and his unſhaken allegiance to the will and proſperity of his ſovereign and country, compelled him to bear.

CHAPTER VI.

——— ——— as this is true,
Let me in ſafety raiſe me from my knees,
Or elſe for ever be confined here
A marble monument!—
——— ——— I have mark'd
A thouſand bluſhing apparitions
To ſtart into her face; a thouſand ſhames
In angel whiteneſs bear away thoſe bluſhes;
And in her eye, there hath appear'd a fire
To burn the errors that the COUNT doth hold
Againſt her maiden truth— SHAKSPEARE.

RODOLPH, after having left the preſence of the Viceroy, became ſtill more and more the victim of anxiety, ſuſpicion, and deſpair—His battered fortunes little enabling him to comply as he could wiſh with the honourable truſt aſſigned to his charge and command.

The flattering hope of ſeeing the rich heir of Martorano caſtle wedded to his daughter, flitted paſt his tortured imagination like a ſpirit in the air. The ſuppoſed incontinency of Santa Maria, fruſtrated every golden project; for Rodolph reduced it to a fixed point, that if his daughter had been actually debauched by Rinaldo, he would never regard her afterwards in any other view than a miſtreſs—Moſt falſe and unfriendly ſuggeſtion!—utterly diſconſonant and inapplicable to the noble virtues of his generous kinſman—the baſe phantom only of a diſtracted father's tortured brain. Though fathers, like lovers, often think every

thing poſſible which they fear, and, with Rodolph—

To be once in doubt, was once to be reſolv'd——

Whilſt on the other hand, if Santa-Maria had yielded to the embraces of a ſtranger, that Rinaldo would break off every nuptial treaty, and ſhun her, as a peſtilence. He too fatally knew alſo, that the younger Contarini's hereditary—implacable vengeance, would loſe no occaſion to blacken his daughter's already tainted fame in the bittereſt colours! and feared too much—(and too true, alas! were his fears) that through his artifice and his emiſſaries, he would pour the ſubtle poiſon into Rinaldo and Manfredi's ears, before the myſtery could be explained either to him or them; for this young Italian had now become as ſuperior to his power, arts, and vengeance, as he had formerly proved himſelf to be above thoſe of *his* father's; ſo much ſo, in fact, as to have made him long ſuſpect, that his ſon Ferdinand (in whoſe young breaſt the ſame cruel family animoſity had fiercely taken root) had by ſome myſterious act of vengeance, fallen a victim to his ſuperior artifice.

Thus tormented with Santa-Maria's ſuppoſed violation of her chaſtity, and a long chain of other diſtreſſing reflections; Rodolph flew, like a madman, to his chamber, and after tearing his hair, and beating his diſtracted head againſt the walls, he fell proſtrate on the floor, like a ſtout oak overcome by the tempeſt of adverſity.

The noiſe of his fall, ſoon brought the Counteſs to his chamber, where ſhe beheld her Lord the fallen victim of madneſs, anguiſh, and deſpair. Iſabella, immediately forgot her own ſorrows, to ſoothe thoſe of Rodolph. She ſoftened his agonies, cheriſhed him with the healing balſam of conjugal tenderneſs; comforted his bleeding ſoul, argued him by degrees into a ſtate of reaſon, aſſiſted in raiſing him from his proſtrate ſituation, and, leading him to his chair, preſſed his feveriſh hand with the warm kiſs of affection; and by every paſt idea of their mutual affection, entreated him to be of better cheer.

By theſe tender remonſtrances, Rodolph re-aſſumed his ſenſes; then reclining his deſpondent head on the boſom of his wife, he bitterly exclaimed—" Why did our evil ſtars ever curſe us with a child?" Then looking wildly upon Iſabella, he demanded to know, if Santa-Maria was innocent? —She continued ſilent.—He began to ſtart and rave—" Say!—anſwer me (exclaimed Rodolph) is my daughter—*pregnant?*" The Counteſs dejectedly hung down her head.

" She is really guilty, then?"

On this, Iſabella threw her arms around his neck, and wept bitterly.—

The Count, on this palpable conviction of Santa-Maria's guilt, ſtarted from his chair, and drawing his ſword, ſwore by St. Mark, that he would inſtantly ſacrifice her to his honour, if ſhe did not

proclaim the partner of her infamy.—Roused by this furious menace, Isabella intercepted her enraged Lord in his bloody purpose, and catching hold of him by the cloke, fell upon her knees, and with maternal, conjugal tenderness, entreated a few moments of discourse.

Rodolph consented to hear her.

" My Lord, then (said Isabella) our Santa-Maria, I believe, is really *pregnant* —a mystery, nevertheless, hangs over this dark business, which time only can discover. Attend that event, I do most fervently conjure you. Providence, sooner or late, will reveal the whole—Nay, do not thus look so dreadfully, and roll your eye-balls as though they would start from out their very sockets! As a mother, and the tendereſt of mothers, have I conjured my child, to reveal the secret that has cast such a dark cloud over our present domestic happiness. She, notwithstanding this, asserts her innocence, perseveres still in the enjoyment of her virtue and chastity. Nay, has most solemnly appealed to the great God of her creation, that she is as pure, as uncontaminated, as at the awful moment in which I gave her birth."

" Unheard of obstinacy!—unparalleled perjury!—impossible!—it cannot be!"

" Have a moment's patience, my dear Lord. There is still one resource left, which may lead to a discovery, that our daughter's conscience cannot well withstand. Santa-Maria has been hitherto ac-

counted good, chaſte, modeſt, virtuous; ſhe entertains the moſt ſenſible reverence for Friar Matalone, her confeſſor. He ſhall be ſent for. His piety and holy perſuaſions may wrench the ſecret from her thoughts. If he cannot ſucceed in this unhappy, myſterious affair; act afterwards as your diſcretion think moſt fit. My will ſhall then be guided by your's. But oh! my dear Rodolph (concluded the Counteſs, ſoftening his hand with her tears and embraces) my dear—dear Lord, in pity ſave our child—now alas! our only child.—

But one, poor one, one poor and loving child!
SHAKSPEARE.

"Do not ſuffer her to fall a ſudden victim to your wrath—if guilty, repentance, will, in time, waſh away her guilt. Be you to Santa-Maria, the ſame merciful judge and father, as you may hereafter expect to behold, in the great and lenient author of your preſent being."

——How would you be,
If he, which is the top of judgment, ſhould
But judge you, as you are? Oh! think on that
And mercy then will breathe within your lips,
Like man new made.
SHAKESPEARE.

Rodolph, wiſhing to believe that his daughter was innocent; and, if not ſo, anxious to learn who was the partner of her infamy; conſented to delay his vengeance for a ſecond time. And already had

he ſtamped the fixed determination in the receſſes of his heart, that if Santa-Maria was really culpable, that all compunction ſhould be obliterated. His honour, his happineſs, his every thing deſirable in this world, were now fatally at ſtake, and he became therefore deſperately reſolved not only to deſtroy the weak and beauteous object of his miſeries, but alſo to remove the ſuſpected obſtacle that had long ſtood in the way of his ambition, aggrandiſement and wealth.

Friar Matalone came to the palace early on the next morning, and after two hours dedicated to confeſſion with Santa-Maria, he joined the Count and Counteſs, who were attending him in an antichamber, with all that anxiety, as can be poſſibly conceived in ſuch a momentous ſuſpenſe and ſituation as their's.

The prieſt, with all that calmneſs and Chriſtian fortitude, which had ever characterized his religious tenets, and with that bigotry alſo, which enveloped the complection of thoſe times, thus related what had paſſed between himſelf and Santa-Maria:

" Never (ſaid Matalone, with the ſtrongeſt emphaſis of aſtoniſhment)—never, in the whole courſe of my function, did I experience ſuch an unſearchable, ſuch an unparalleled myſtery.—--Your daughter has proteſted her innocence, in the moſt ſolemn manner. Thrice did ſhe moſt devoutly

kneel before the holy crucifix, and thrice proteſt the ſame. It would be impiety to ſuppoſe, that her internal creation proceeds from the extraordinary powers of heaven; though ſtill (ſaid the Friar, after a momentary pauſe)—nothing is, or ever can be, impoſſible to God. Therefore, oh! Rodolph, delay your vengeance, your daughter *may be innocent*. The proteſtations of her chaſtity have confounded me.—They were ſo ſolemn, ſo inflexible, and ſo Chriſtian like, that I was ſtruck with amazement. When ſhe lifted up her eyes to heaven, they ſeemed inſpired with the ſame innocence as beams upon the celeſtial purity, ſhe was ſo devoutly appealing to. Therefore, I implore you, once again, to poſtpone your wrath. Let time reveal this extraordinary myſtery. Nay, Count (exclaimed Matalone, ſomewhat harſhly, on perceiving Rodolph's brow curling with vengeance, diſbelief, and indignation) dare not attempt to commit unmanly, unfatherly violence on your child!—No, not on the ſevereſt pains of eccleſiaſtical puniſhment; for on the revelation of this intricate myſtery depends not only the future fame or diſhonour—-the everlaſting happineſs or miſery, of an hitherto uncharged mortal; but, perhaps, ſome wonderful inſtance of ſupernatural agency."

When friar Matalone had pronounced this laſt ſentence, and which he did with uncommon energy, he returned to his mo-

naſtery; leaving Iſabella overjoyed that her child had gained a third reſpite. Whilſt, on the other hand, Rodolph remained overwhelmed with ſpleen, impatience, rage, mortification, and all the other tortures that the malignant furies could inſpire him withal.

CHAPTER VII.

——Were I under the terms of death,
Th' impreſſion of keen whips I'd wear as rubies,
And ſtrip myſelf to death, as to a bed
That longing I've been ſick for, ere I'd yield
My body up to ſhame.

The bow is bent, and drawn, make from the ſhaft!
There's ſome ill planet reigns.
We muſt be patient, till the heavens look
With an aſpect more favourable. SHAKSPEARE.

DURING this melancholy ſuſpenſe, the unhappy Santa-Maria was haſtening on to the mournful goal of miſery and death. Her fine commanding features were ſhaded by the yellow leaf. Her black, penetrating eye, became languid and ſunk. Her cheeks had wholly loſt their roſeate bloom, and her whole perſon appeared the pale image of unſeaſonable decay.

Our helpleſs victim had by this time, become ſo ſteady in her opinion of a ſpeedy annihilation, and the impoſſibility of her ever experiencing again the return of her parent's former affections; and, what was ſtill more bitter to her galled imagination, the once pleaſing hope of

being fondly united to Rinaldo; that ſhe manifeſted ſuch a calmneſs of mind, ſuch an equanimity of temper, and ſuch a degree of fortitude and reſignation, as excited the admiration and pity of the whole palace. Sometimes, indeed, ſhe entertained the flattering reflection, that her ſuppoſed pregnancy was thoroughly impoſſible; and that both the ſurgeon's and her mother's deciſions would prove falſe and abortive in the end. Supported by theſe pleaſing ideas, ſhe would ever and anon draw forth the contraſted portraits of Rinaldo, from the ſoft receſſes of her agitated boſom. Stedfaſtly and tearfully would ſhe gaze on one or the other; and as they reſpectively ſtruck her tortured fancy, ſhe would aſſimilate her lover, when depreſſed and emaciated by ſickneſs to what *ſhe* now was; and, again, reſemble what ſhe had ſo lately been, to what Rinaldo might be now.

On other occaſional ſtarts of reflection, Santa-Maria would wonder what had become of the young Prince; and would queſtion the domeſtics who were moſt endeared to her, when her father had heard from the caſtle? The laſt time ſhe was revolving this ſubject in her diſtracted mind, Sylvia came running breathleſs into her chamber, and with a trembling agitated accent exclaimed—That a courier had but juſt now arrived from the ſouth.

" What, from my dear Lord Rinaldo?"

" No, Signiora, not from my Lord Rinaldo—"

" From Manfredi then—ſay—anſwer me—Sylvia—is the young Prince dead—is he relapſed—is he—"

" I know not, Signiora—The courier came not from the caſtle—but from your Lady-mother's near kinſman—the Chevalier D'Arcos—But have patience, my dear young miſtreſs, and I will relate every thing that Carlo has this moment communicated to me ——"

" I *have* patience, Sylvia—I *muſt* have patience—*patience* now is a cardinal virtue, which I look up to with reverence."

" And, indeed (obſerved Sylvia with tears in her eyes) it is a virtue that we muſt now all look up to—But as I was going to obſerve, Signiora—Carlo, but a few moments ago, came almoſt breathleſs into my chamber, and ſaid that a courier had juſt arrived from the Chevalier. He knew it was from the Chevalier D'Arcos, as his uncle, Droſi, who conveyed the paquet to his maſter, recognized the fellow's carriage. However, in a few moments after my Lord had opened the letter, and caſt his ſombrous eye over its contents, his countenance became agitated beyond its wonted degree of rage, ſternneſs and diſappointment. Poor Droſi, always too much concerned and officious in the Count's affairs, now ſtepped incautiouſly

forward (notwithſtanding the check that Carlo ſaid he had given his uncle, with pulling him back by the cloke) and in the moſt ſubmiſſive manner imaginable, requeſted to know if the contents favoured aught of ill news? This ill-timed queſtion ſerved only to increaſe the flame, which had already begun to rage with ſuch uncommon fury, and Droſi ſoon experienced a ſhare of its ſcorching heat, for ſcarce had he time to finiſh his ſentence, before the Count dealt him ſuch a violent blow with the back of his left hand, as felled him proſtrate on the floor. Carlo was afraid to come forward, and aſſiſt his uncle to riſe, leſt he ſhould meet with a ſimilar reception. Droſi, however, did not much need his help, for he ſoon recovered his legs, obſerving, with the greateſt patience and good nature, as he got up—"*That thoſe who fall, muſt riſe again.*" At theſe words (as Carlo tells me) the Count was wonderfully moved; and that the anger which had ſunk his brow into the very eye-lid, was on a ſudden raiſed to the very height of reflection. His rigid countenance, from that inſtant, began to relax from its late ſeverity; and after carefully putting the paquet in his doublet, he turned round to Droſi, and proceeded ſo far as to entreat forgiveneſs for the blow he had given him—This done, he repeated what he had juſt heard

him ſay, " *That thoſe who fall, muſt riſe again.*"——On this, my Lord Rodolph ſmiled, and afterwards deſired Droſi, in the gentleſt terms poſſible, to follow him to his private cloſet.

Oh! Miſchief! thou art ſwift
To enter in the thoughts of deſperate men!

SHAKSPEARE.

Sylvia having thus far related as much as ſhe knew concerning this myſterious paquet, was on the point of commencing a long ſtring of doubts, reaſonings, and arguments upon the words—" *That thoſe who fall, muſt riſe again*"—when ſhe was interrupted by the footſteps of the Counteſs. When her miſtreſs therefore entered the apartment, Sylvia reſpectfully made her obeiſance, and retired.

The unhappy Santa-Maria, roſe at her mother's appearance, and falling on her knee, moiſtened the outſtretched parental hand with the guſhing effuſion of bitter ſorrow.

Iſabella, after having helped to raiſe her daughter, claſped her in her arms, and, in broken accents; faltered out—" My child, it is at length our doom to part!"

" To part!—(exclaimed Santa-Maria, hanging her diſconſolate head upon her mother's ſhoulder) to part?—What? to part for ever?"—

" Be ſeated, my child, and comfort yourſelf with fortitude and calmneſs—

Part, we muſt—but God forbid for ever —My life and your's, both depend upon that awful neceſſity.—Your father, in the zenith of his rage and impetuoſity, has menaced your life!"—

"Then let him have it:—if my death will ſatisfy and obliterate his unkind ſuſpicions, how welcome would I reſign myſelf to his wrath and vengeance."

"Oh! my Santa-Maria, are his ſuſpicions then wrong indeed? This is perhaps one of the laſt times we ſhall meet for ſome diſtant period—open your ſoul, therefore, to a mother who adores, who reveres you. If, in an unguarded moment, your tender heart has been led aſtray, to me confeſs it.—From my very ſoul, ſhall I forgive you; and may I never behold the awful preſence of my God (to whom my prayers ſhall be continually offered up for your happineſs and welfare, here and hereafter) if I ever reveal the ſecret to my lord, your father."

"Oh! then (exclaimed Santa-Maria, falling on her knees, and raiſing her hands and eyes to Heaven)—thus let me moſt ſolemnly appeal in your revered preſence, to the great Almighty that muſt judge me hereafter, if ever I deviated, in thought or deed, from thoſe ſacred rules of chaſtity and virtue that have been inculcated within me, both by his Divine Precepts

and your maternal inſtructions.—Oh! may that ſuperior ——"

"It is enough—it is enough, my child (ſaid the Counteſs, interrupting her daughter, in this her intended ſecond ſolemn ejaculation, and raiſing her once more from her pious proſtrate ſituation) indeed it is enough, I am ſatisfied of your innocence; neither in thought or deed, do I believe you guilty. Heaven's will be done; under that bleſſed divine aſſurance, my ſoul moſt ſtrongly prepoſſeſſes me, that I ſhall live to ſee your honeſt fame cleared to the whole world, and once more ſhall I behold you reſtored to happineſs and honour."

After theſe mutual proteſtations and aſſurances of innocence and affection, Santa-Maria and the Counteſs became entirely calm and reſigned. They now experienced ſuch a flow of fortitude and tranquillity, as to render the one perfectly capable of encountering the moſt fatal miſchances, and the other of adminiſtring the moſt painful counſels.

"My child (ſaid Lady Iſabella, with the moſt collected emphaſis) my deareſt, and now only child, we too ſure muſt part; your father, I am too fatally convinced, deſigns ultimately to ſacrifice you to his revenge and honour—you cannot fly from his wrath too ſuddenly. He is now alone in his cloſet enraged, beyond conception, with ſome fatal buſineſs, that has lately

been diſpatched hither, by the Chevalier d'Arcos. I encountered him but now in the gallery, and anxiouſly enquired the cauſe of his diſtraction, and alſo aſked to know the contents of my kinſman's correſpondence. He only anſwered me with a frown, and churliſhly haſtened from me. Suſpicious, therefore, of ſome cruel deſign againſt my child's exiſtence, I have brought with me a diſguiſe, that will not only conceal your ſex, and the ſuppoſed evidence of your guilt, but enſure you ſafety and protection wherever you may chance to bend your wandering footſteps. It is the equipage of a pilgrim, worn formerly by my grand-ſire, when he travelled to the Holy Land. Beneath it alſo you may ſtring your lute; whoſe dulcive ſounds ſo oft have raiſed my admiring ſoul to ſcenes of future bliſs.—But, alas! I wander—— though every houſe will meet my unknown child with the ſweet ſmile of "Welcome, holy ſtranger"—ſtill it is neceſſary for thee to be provided againſt accidental neceſſities. Take, therefore, this ſcrip, which contains neceſſary proviſions.—Here, alſo, take this bag of gold, and with it accept this diamond croſs, this bracelet and necklace—Wear them for your mother's ſake. The former will afford the choiceſt ſolace to your private thoughts and pious meditations.—Nay, do not weep, my deareſt Santa—ſupport your fortitude—live for a fond parent's

ſake—live for your own ſake—and live for your future fame alſo. I have ſcattered the Count's domeſtics among various parts of the city. Droſi, is encloſed with him in his cabinet; adviſing, perhaps, with his maſter, ſome haſty meaſure to effect your death and ruin. Carlo and Sylvia, are only ſtirring about the palace. Their ſimplicity will not ſuffer them to harbour the leaſt ſurmiſe. Haſte, then, my child, and gird this holy mantle on thee. Time is on the wing.—This pilgrim's ſtaff, will aſſiſt and ſupport your weary ſteps.—An hour's delay may coſt me a dearly beloved daughter."

"One word, my mother, before we part? anſwer me but this, and I ſhall go hence with patience, fortitude, and reſignation—Say, have you heard aught of Prince Rinaldo?"

"But briefly—report has told me, that his malady has returned upon him. Nay, do not weep my child, all yet will one day, I hope, be well."

"It is ſtrange my mother."

"All now is ſtrange my child. Every thing is changed to darkneſs and perplexity. —But we loiter, Santa-Maria—hark!--methought I heard your father's voice.—Terrible apprehenſion—adieu—adieu.—Haſte—oh! haſte! from this abode of miſery and deſtruction."

"Farewell, my deareſt mother."

" For the preſent, my deareſt child fare-well."

——————Here ſhe ſhook
The holy water from her heavenly eyes;
And clamour motioned, then away ſhe ſtarted
To deal with grief alone.—
Once or twice, ſhe heav'd the name of father
Pantingly forth, as if it preſs'd her heart.

SHAKSPEARE.

On this the Counteſs conducted her daughter to a poſtern, and, with mingled joy and grief, beheld her flying from the manſion of death. She had directed Santa-Maria to ſteer her courſe weſtward; that, in caſe of a ſudden diſcovery and purſuit, ſhe might take ſanctuary from her father's wrath in the *Carthuſian monaſtery*.

CHAPTER VIII.

For by the ſacred radiance of the ſun,
The myſteries of Hecate, and the night—
By all the operations of the orbs,
From whom we do exiſt, and ceaſe to be—
Here I diſclaim all my paternal care,
Propinquity and property of blood!

I would diſſemble my nature, where
My fortunes and my friends at ſtake, requir'd
I ſhould do ſo in honor!

SHAKSPEARE.

IT was late in the evening before Rodolph quitted his cloſet; and when he met the Lady Iſabella, his countenance rather bordered on cheerfulneſs, than otherwiſe. The Counteſs, at the ſame time, encountered her Lord with a kind of timid ſatisfaction.

Both ſeemed ſomewhat pleaſed—for both, perhaps, internally poſſeſſed their ſecret motives for the fluctuating ſenſations they then experienced.

At ſupper-time it had been cuſtomary for the Counteſs to ſend a diſh of viands to Santa-Maria's chamber, ſince the period of her diſgrace. Iſabella prepared to perform that ceremony this evening with an uncommon degree of terror and anxiety. Sylvia was always the embaſſadreſs on theſe occaſions, and ſhe was diſpatched therefore, as uſual, with the ſupper to her young miſtreſs's apartment.

It is eaſier to imagine, than deſcribe, the acute ſenſations which the Counteſs experienced during this momentous interval. The inſtant, however, that ſhe diſtinguiſhed the returning footſteps of Sylvia, Iſabella ſummoned up all her fortitude and preſence of mind, and prepared herſelf, with the greateſt compoſure, for the fatal diſcovery.

When Sylvia, therefore entered the ſupper-hall, with palid aſpect and trembling limbs—unable to articulate a ſingle ſyllable through ſorrow and ſurpriſe—the Counteſs ſtarted from her ſeat, and, turning round to avoid the ſearching eye of Rodolph, with great agony exclaimed—"Speak, Sylvia!—Say, what freſh diſaſter is now upon the wing!—Oh! ſay—Is my Santa-Maria dead again?"—The Count, on the other hand, confounded by the girl's terrors, and alarmed by his wife's afflicting expreſſions,

rudely caught the trembling Sylvia by the arm, and peremptorily inſiſted on immediately knowing the cauſe of her extraordinary fears. The poor wench, after ſome moments pauſe, with difficulty replied—"That her young miſtreſs was not to be found;—that ſhe had ſearched her's, and all the adjacent chambers, and no traces of her were to be diſcovered——"

If hypocriſy, under ſuch circumſtances as theſe, can poſſibly be accounted a crime, the ſtain of it muſt be concealed under the partial veil of maternal tenderneſs.

No ſooner, therefore, had the laſt expreſſion eſcaped from Sylvia's lips, than the Counteſs haſtily quitted the ſupper-room, and flew to the deſerted chamber of —her well-known fugitive child;—attempting to conceal, by this precipitate ſtep, the feigned diſtreſs that ſhe had been ſo fatally compelled to counterfeit.

Rodolph, in the mean time, ſummoned all his domeſtics to the ſupper-hall, and queſtioned them, one by one, concerning his daughter's eſcape. The laſt he interrogated were Carlo, his young page, and the faithful Sylvia. Theſe two had ever been Santa-Maria's chief attendants and favorites, from her infancy upwards: the Count, therefore, was particularly pointed with them. Carlo and Sylvia, on perceiving that the eye of ſuſpicion was levelled at them, fell together on their knees and ſolemnly appealed to Heaven to be the

avoucher of their innocence. The page in particular, after this fervent ejaculation, with great emphaſis exclaimed, "Would to God that I *did* know where my young miſtreſs was! for, to the very extremity of the earth would I follow her, and devote myſelf to her ſervice!"

On hearing this enthuſiaſtic exclamation, Rodolph, doubly knit his brows, and ſtood for a while abſorbed in reflection. His thoughts were bitter—diſgraceful to himſelf—and the honor of his child. He regarded Carlo, for the firſt time, with the glance of peculiar attention. He diſcovered a ſtriking beauty and ſymmetry in his countenance and ſhape, that had never been duly remarked by him before. His pride, however, at preſent overcame his ſuſpicions; and, with a ſtern voice, therefore, he now only ordered both him and Sylvia to retire to their reſpective apartments.

Juſt as the Count was ordering his horſes to be prepared for a purſuit, Iſabella returned with great compoſure to the hall. When the Counteſs diſcovered his purpoſe, ſhe forthwith ſtrongly endeavoured to diſſuade him from his intention. "It is dark my Lord (ſaid the alarmed mother) tempeſtuous—and the gloomineſs of the ſky portends an approaching hurricane—Behold yonder—(as though at this moment heaven auſpiciouſly favoured a parent's anxiety, and a daughter's misfor-

tunes) turn thine eye to that window which has a weſtern proſpect, and ſee what black and thick clouds of ſmoke and fire that now hover over the dreadful Monte di Somma. Indeed, my Lord, you muſt not go to-night. Be perſuaded, dear Rodolph, and delay your purpoſe till the morning."

Whilſt Iſabella was thus exerciſing her diſſuaſive powers, the Count obſerved her anxious looks, with his wonted ſcrutiny. After a ſhort pauſe however he ordered his domeſtics to depart—Then turning to the Counteſs—" Dame (ſaid he, with his uſual ſolemnity) I ſhall purſue your counſel, though I ſhall neither purſue our unworthy daughter now or on the morn. I will not caſt freſh fuel into an overſcorching fire. The womb of yonder flaming mount cannot vomit things more bitter and dreadful, than what our *enemy* has already done. I mean our enemy (ſaid Rodolph, obſerving the Counteſs prepared to interrupt him) our bitter enemy, Santa-Maria. That guilty foe againſt our honour and our houſe. Her crime, however, will now be her daily puniſhment. Now, an unhappy outcaſt, ſhe will experience the fulneſs of her guilt. In ſolitude and miſery ſhall ſhe waſte her future days: for whilſt I have exiſtence, I will hunt her, like a wild beaſt of prey, from the haunts of ſociety—But, Dame, I have ſome reaſon to ſuſpect, no mat-

ter—my ſuſpicions, notwithſtanding, have their foundation. Be not ſurprized—but I think, that the young page Carlo was—privy to her eſcape, and—oh! torture, ſure it cannot be—ſtill ſuch things have been—have been—aye—but have they been ſo NOW?—Hell and diſtraction—no—they could not be—"

Iſabella on this, interrupted the Count, and lacking her former circumſpection and counterfeit carriage, with much anxiety exclaimed—" Your ſuſpicions, my Lord, are ill-founded: Carlo is innocent. He knew not of your daughter's eſcape—the page"——Here the Counteſs began to recollect, and ſoon found herſelf both overwhelmed with confuſion, and laid open to detection.

Rodolph, aſtoniſhed at this plain declaration, and ſtruck, moreover, with Iſabella's confuſed appearance, darted ſuch a look upon her, that ſeemed to penetrate to the innermoſt receſſes of her ſoul. The Counteſs ſhrunk from this mental enquiry—ſhe ſtood angry, abaſhed, and enraged, with her own indiſcretion; whilſt Rodolph on the other hand, became every moment more and more convinced that his wife had adviſed and effected her daughter's eſcape. Her ſtrong diſſuaſions againſt the purſuit, ſtrengthened and confirmed theſe ſuggeſtions. Nay, his ſuſpicions now proceeded ſtill farther—hurrying him on, as it were, from the mid-road to its fartheſt

extremity—He concluded, therefore, that Iſabella muſt alſo know the cauſe and partner of her daughter's infamy.

" Dame, then, (ſaid the Count, with uncommon fierceneſs, and lion-like aſpect) knowedſt thou ought of our daughter's eſcape, before the alarm was given?"

" No—I—did—not—my Lord," (heſitatingly replied Iſabella, and tuning her mind on the occaſion, like unto our bard)

——— ———If I do lie, and do
No harm by it, though the gods hear, I hope
They'll pardon it———

" No demurs, no falterings, dame—but plainly anſwer me—ſay, therefore, knowedſt thou ought of Santa-Maria's flight before the alarm was given; or who was ſharer in her luſt and maiden wantonneſs? To heaven, and to your honour, make true reply, according to your knowledge or ignorance of theſe ſame facts—" Iſabella heſitated and wept—" To heaven, and to your honour (repeated the Count, doubled irritated and confirmed by theſe palpable ſymptoms of guilt) make anſwer, I ſay—"

" To heaven, then, and to my honour, if it muſt be ſo (replied the Counteſs, with much fortitude and compoſure) I know nothing of either."

The ſame recording angel that obliterated the oath of our brave veteran with a tear, now looked down, it is hoped, with an equal eye of ſympathy, and from the

fatal tablet effaced this falſehood of the grief-charged Iſabella.

Rodolph was ſtaggered at this reply, which tended greatly to cripple that wonderful inſight, he ever thought himſelf unerringly poſſeſſed of. Notwithſtanding the ſolemnity, however, of the Counteſs's declaration, and the calm dignity with which ſhe had proteſted it, he could not loſe ſight of his ſuſpicions. For, ſuſpicions with him ſoon haſtened on to aſſurances of guilt. He therefore ordered Iſabella, for the time to come, to provide an apartment for herſelf alone, as he neither deſired in future her company or her counſel. On this Rodolph ſtretched onward through the corridor to his cloſet, fully determined from that hour to ſhut the door of confidence againſt his ſuſpected wife.

CHAPTER. IX.

"One that loves a cup of hot wine, with not a drop of allaying Tiber in't; ſaid to be ſomething imperfect in favouring the firſt complaint, haſty and tinder-like upon too trivial motion! one that converſes more with the buttock of the night, than with the forehead of the morning. What he thinks he utters, and ſpends his malice in his breath.———

SHAKSPEARE.

RODOLPH, for that evening, churliſhly left the Lady Iſabella in a ſtate of the utmoſt diſtraction and anxiety. In the morning he ſent for Droſi, and then ordered

him to ſend Bernardine and Goddard up to his private cloſet.—

" Humph—(ſays Droſi to himſelf, as he went out) here is ſome miſchief going forward—Bernardine and Goddard are terrible rogues—By Saint-Marco, they are moſt bloody rogues—my Lord knows beſt who to employ on his old errands—I ſhall not ſtand the hazard, therefore, of another blow for my officiouſneſs—(only thinking of the laſt, which had been a repetition of hundreds) for freely ſpeaking my mind—"

This ſame Droſi was a good-natured—witty—though a miſchievous rogue withal—He would not heſitate at tranſacting a trifling buſineſs for his Lord—but nothing—nothing that favoured of blood—Rodolph knew his character, genius, and temper, well—Droſi, was already deep in his ſecrets—Droſi, alſo, was too fond of the lachryma-chriſti, and the true falernian, to retain a deep and ſecure one *long*—Drunkards might let out ſecrets of importance—and—Rodolph's was a fatal one—Droſi, beſides, was fond of a joke, which would eſcape him, even at the expence of his maſter. Brave as a lion in his own, or Lord's defence, but tame as a lamb to the feeble and diſtreſſed—he would fight for you, but, barring great provocation—not with you—nor would he knowingly injure a worm—much more a fellow creature—Droſi would beat an inſolent hoſt,

and afterwards wait upon one of his meaneſt wenches with a loaf of bread and a ſlice of cheeſe—Thought little of carrying off a pretty damſel himſelf, but would knock down the firſt man that he ſaw attempting to do the ſame—Would put a whole houſe into the greateſt confuſion and conſternation, and then appear like the very picture of innocence, when taxed with the miſchief he had been ſo wantonly guilty of—would ſend his Lord ten leagues out of the way on a cold ſtormy night, when he might be at his deſtination in one—To conclude the brieſeſt chapter, therefore, this ſame Signior Droſi was a moſt miſchievous rogue; and as ſuch, perhaps, you may find him to the end of the book.

CHAPTER X.

——Whatever fiend it was
That wrought upon thee ſo prepoſtercuſly,
He hath got the voice in hell for excellence;
And other devils that ſuggeſt by treaſons,
Do botch and bungle up damnation.——

SHAKSPEARE.

RODOLPH ſummoning together all his brutal ſeverity to aſſiſt and harden him, thus ordered up Bernardine, his croſs-bow man—and, Goddard—his bow and hatchet-man, to attend his commands—

When theſe warlike villains had entered the cloſet, the Count eagerly faſtened the door, and making them be ſeated, he thus addreſſed them in an under voice:

" My brave ſoldiers (ſaid he) you are ſummoned privately here to hear ſome things of great importance, and which I mean to entruſt to your twofold care and confidence:—It is now ten years ſince I raiſed you from the ranks, during the whole of which time you both ſhared with me in the tumults and dangers of war abroad; and alſo have divided with me the domeſtic comforts of happineſs and independence at home—ſay, has it not been truly ſo?"

The men bowed aſſent.

" Then anſwer me, without fear or heſitation—Are you yet acquainted with the eternal ſtain that our daughter Santa-Maria has fixed on us, and our houſe;—with her ſubſequent flight to avoid my revenge, and conceal her own diſgrace?"

" We do, my gracious Lord (replied Bernardine) with heartfelt ſorrow, have we both heard this mournful news."

" Do you likewiſe know from whom proceeds this curſt, contaminating blot?"

" No—my good Lord."

" Then know, my ſoldiers, it comes from our kinſman—the Prince Rinaldo—"

This ſuggeſtion had never eſcaped from any one in the palace till now, and had only, as yet, exiſted in the Count's brain; when Rodolph, therefore, perceived the effect and aſtoniſhment that it had on his dependent auditors, he immediately put this queſtion home and ſteadily to them, and demanded—" What reparation he

could have for the ingratitude of his kinſman, who had taken the advantage of his generoſity to debauch his child; and what ſatisfaction could atone for the loſs of her honour, and the ſhame he had annexed to his family for ever?"

"Nought but death (replied Bernardine eagerly.)

"Nothing but his blood, my Lord (added Goddard ſavagely) ſhould ſatisfy me."

"Noble-minded—brave-hearted men—Oh! how well deſerving are you both of my eſteem, protection, and admiration!"

Rodolph having worked up theſe weak ſanguinary men to anger and revenge, he next prepared to introduce his favourite point, that required ſome ſuch inſinuating diſcourſe, with which he had ſo artfully prefaced his main deſign—The loſt fame of poor Santa-Maria had ſorely touched his heart. He could not, however, poſitively realize the cauſe thereof in the perſon of the Lord Rinaldo. Surmiſe, nevertheleſs, had given a ſtrong colour of ſuſpicion. At all points, he regarded the ſubject as gone too far by, to be ever again recovered. The diſhonour, he knew, did not altogether attach itſelf to him. He was not the cauſe of it—therefore, could not divide the ſhame, except (as he conceived) among the illiberal part of mankind.

The principal objects before him, awake

or aſleep, that tormented his mind, were the ſore apprehenſions of his loſs of fame and honour. The idea of once more fighting at the ſide of his Viceroy; and in the cauſe that his countrymen were about to eſpouſe, warmed his ambition, and exultingly made his heart aſpire to farther deeds of warlike glories. But theſe flattering hopes were now fruſtrated by the diſhonour of Santa-Maria. He could not juſt at preſent raiſe ten men at arms;—whereas, the deficiency of the regiment he had been appointed to lead to the glorious field of battle, was reported to lack ten ſcore, to make up the accuſtomed complement—What, therefore, was to be reſolved upon?—What could be reſolved upon?—what?

Why, nothing more or leſs than the aſſaſſination of Prince Rinaldo, to whoſe great fortunes and proud towers, he was the indiſputable heir—A deed, that, to be brief, the Count had fully determined upon in his own mind; and, therefore, had ſent for theſe fellows to be the immediate inſtruments of his ſanguinary purpoſe.

"My brave ſoldiers (continued Rodolph) in your preſent maſter, behold the moſt wretched being in exiſtence—One misfortune is in general certain of coming upon another: for, but lately our Viceroy ſent for me, to hold a private conference. The ſubject of this interview was

an appointment to a regiment of cavalry, with an order to reſtore it to its priſtine diſcipline, and former warlike quota and appearance.——The regiment, however, lacks two hundred men to render it complete—But, alas! my good fellows, this glorious buſineſs cannot be now accompliſhed—"

"And why not, my Lord?" (ſaid Bernardine, with the moſt anxious emotions in his voice and countenance).

"You know, good Bernardine, that I have already ſpent vaſt ſums of money abroad in our Neapolitan wars; and that at home I have maintained my houſehold with all the munificence likewiſe of a Neapolitan baron. Theſe ſucceeding expences have exhauſted my means—I looked up, however, for a reſtoration of them, in the alliance of my daughter with my wealthy kinſman. Theſe expectations, you perceive, are now baniſhed for ever; and your old Captain muſt now ſink with diſhonour to his grave. For—it cannot be expected, that if Santa-Maria has condeſcended to become Lord Rinaldo's miſtreſs, that he will ever condeſcend alſo to make her his wife."

"The young Prince's puniſhment, my Lord—(exclaimed Goddard) cannot be exceeded by his ingratitude."

"Say, my gracious maſter (added Bernardine) can *we* revenge you?"

"My brave, my honeſt ſoldiers (re-

turned the Count, riſing, and folding them both in his arms) how ye have revived my hopes, raiſed my falling fame, and cheered my future proſpects; yes, my beloved comrades (for Rodolph, when he wiſhed to carry a favourite point, would ſtoop to the meaneſt equality) yes, ye can revenge me."

"Point out to us (ſaid Goddard) point to the way and means, my Lord; and we will give you your revenge."

"It is, then (anſwered the Count in a ſtern, ſolemn, and emphatical accent) *To ſurpriſe Martorano Caſtle——to aſſaſſinate the Prince, and with him his favourite tutor and guardian, Manfredi!!!*"

The fellows pauſed and were ſilent.

The cunning determined Rodolph, however, after having thus far ſucceſsfully baited his hook, now took the opportunity of throwing in a freſh lure, which the half-reſolute villains very ſoon and eagerly catched at.

"I perceive (thus artfully continued the Count) that my propoſals have excited ſome alarm, a ridiculous interval of ſuſpence, unworthy of your brave and dauntleſs minds; unmanly apprehenſions! The deed accompliſhed, will lead us all into the field of glory, and into the plains of affluence. For, on the faith of a Neapolitan baron, I promiſe ye both, that the recompence of Rinaldo's and Manfredi's deaths—(for here again, I ſay, that that

uſurper of my kinſman's affections, muſt go on this ſame long journey; he is cunning and ſuſpicious, therefore might pry into the act; he is faithful and moſt loving withal to his lordly maſter; therefore, he cannot but hereafter thank us, if to Heaven he may go, that we had ſent them on the ſame happy paſſage together, undivided as they have lived)—ſhall not only afford you great riches, but ſtill greater honours. You ſhall have 500 crowns each, when I take poſſeſſion of the caſtle. You ſhall afterwards be dubbed my ancients, accompany your brave viceroy to the heart of treacherous Conſtantinople, vanquiſh the baſe marauders of our ſanctioned territories; then return home with the glorious title of champions of Italy; and thereby enſure yourſelves immortal honour in this world, and eternal glory in the next!"

Theſe deluſive promiſes and allurements, had their deſired effect on Bernardine and Goddard; for at every latter word that the Count had uttered, their eyes flaſhed fire; and, overcome at laſt, by the natural courage, or rather, genuine ferocity of their diſpoſitions, and the enthuſiaſm of their diſordered imaginations, they both drew their ſwords at the ſame moment, and ſwore;—

"*By the Almighty Saints above, that they would not delay an hour in ſacrificing every*

thing, to the honour and vengeance of their lord and captain!!!"—

Theſe laſt expreſſions were ſpoken with ſuch warmth and vociferation, as to alarm Rodolph. He, therefore, anxiouſly recommended them to be cool, and to liſten diſpaſſionately to what he had farther to ſay.

" In the morning, you ſhall ſet off for *the caſtle*, which is ſix and fifty leagues from Naples, an eaſy journey of ſix days. It is not far diſtant from the town of Martorano, from whence it bears its name.—Advancing into the mountains, you come to this important fortreſs. It is ſituated on a high rock; the way which leads to it is dug out of the ſteep ſides of this ſame rock on which it ſtands. The young prince Rinaldo, ſecure in the affections of the neighbouring town and people, is always thinly attended, and *was* accuſtomed almoſt daily to ſaunter in the adjacent expanded foreſts; accompanied only by Manfredi, his bow, his quiver, and his angle. He is eaſily to be ſurprized *out of the Caſtle;* being never armed, but with theſe ſame puerile weapons; for his natural bent has ever been more inclined to peace, ſtudy, and devotion, than to the more manly occupations of war. His nature partakes of the idle *pilgrim*, and not the active ſoldier.

His hand is made to graſp a palmer's ſtaff.

SHAKSPEARE.

In ſhort, he will afford you little pains: both his and Manfredi's worldly concerns can be ſpeedily concluded.—And now, (Bernardine and Goddard, alike my truſty friends and brother ſoldiers) moſt eſpecially do ye mark me—The rear of this ſtrong fortreſs is flanked and protected by the deep and rapid river, *Savuta*. The current, if I recollect right, is ſomewhat ſmooth on the weſt ſide, and the moat there may probably be eaſily croſſed.—I ſhall provide you with a ſtrong rope ladder, made with four iron hooks, which you muſt contrive to throw over the wall, and which catching at the other ſide, you will find yourſelves on the rampart of the caſtle. The glorious deed being performed, convey the bodies afterwards under the mantle of night, to this ſame guardian river—there ſink them both.—But liſt—be cautious in this laſt performance; for, without all due precaution, they may aſcend, and float upon the ſurface. By theſe neglects, and want of forethought, it thus falls out, that *honeſt* murders—ſelf-intereſted ones at leaſt—one time or other, ſo often re-appear before the broad face of day. To obviate all theſe accidental diſcoveries, therefore, will I provide you alſo with long iron chains, with which you may attach the bodies to ſome ponderous ſtones, that have fallen from the adjacent maſſy rock. There then they muſt remain, till the decayed fleſh affords liberty

to the bones. Ropes or thongs might yield too ſoon, and give them ſpeedier acceſs. So far, ſo good; and thus much for the ſurpriſe and aſſaſſinations.—In your abſence, I will methink what ſteps ſhall be next taken; but be cautious that you are not diſcovered lurking about the caſtle. The neighbouring ſhady foreſts, which o'ertop the mountain brows, will afford you ample ſhelter, from which, like the enormous *boa*, ye may dart forward when occaſion offers to ſeize your prey. The deed accompliſhed, return homeward immediately—avoid all the principal towns on your journey from Martorano;—halt firſt at *Nocera de Pagani*; the obſcurity of which place, and the unſuſpicious innocency of the poor ſcattered inhabitants, will baniſh all ſurmiſe. There refreſh yourſelves; then proceed with diſpatch to the ſmall town of Evoli, where you may repoſe and refreſh yourſelves during the meridian ſun. From thence do not halt, till you have paſſed the Appenine mountains, and reached *Lauria*, another ſmall town, in the province of *Baſilicata*; there you may refreſh again, as at *Evoli*, which will make the equal ſhare of diſtance and of time. Proceed then to *Caſtro Villari*, a poor forlorn town, and there watch the coming of twilight, when you may poſt unobſerved through Coſenza, and avoid the enquiries of the

guards in the fortreſs. Laſtly, be cautious in avoiding Bellitto, where my kinſman's d'Arcos Caſtella lies; leave that to the right, and make the moſt ſecret way to Martorano, near which ſtands, eminently aloft, the proud towers of the Prince Rinaldo's Caſtle. And now mark —this journey meaſuring the diſtance of fifty-two leagues, muſt alſo meaſure the ſpace of five days; on the ſixth, therefore (concluded Rodolph, with a firm emphaſis) I ſhall fix the *deed as done.*"

This infernal plot being thus far adjuſted, the no leſs infernal accomplices concerned therein joyouſly retired to their joint apartment; and left the arch-fiend to contemplate on what had paſſed, and to ruminate on what was to come.

CHAPTER XI.

The image of a wicked heinous fault
Lives in his eye: that cloſe aſpect of his
Does ſhow the mood of a much-troubl'd breaſt.

——————— All is oblique;
There's nothing level in our curſed natures
But direct villainy.

SHAKSPEARE.

THE incoherent and unaccuſtomed manner both of ſpeaking and acting, that had lately accompanied the behaviour and converſation of Rodolph, ſtruck the anxious Lady Iſabella with exceſſive pain and aſtoniſhment. She, ever and anon—and anon and ever—plunged herſelf into the moſt

ſerious, perplexing contemplation. Her reflections, however, afforded no other conviction, than that of every thing foreboding ſome freſh diſaſter being near at hand. Filled with theſe melancholy anticipations, and overwhelmed alike with maternal—conjugal tenderneſs, and a ſtrong pre-ſentiment alſo, that all might not be well intended towards her favourite, Lord Rinaldo; ſhe was at length determined to purſue her huſband to his private cloſet, and, by the fondeſt endearments and perſuaſions, endeavour to wrench the lurking miſchief from his heart.

With ſlow and trembling ſteps, therefore, ſhe had made her way to Rodolph's cloſet: but—on the moment—the very critical moment—that ſhe had put her hand forth to knock at the door—Iſabella's powers, already overpreſſed with doubt, tumult, and fear, were ſtruck motionleſs, by that dreadful, uncertain exclamation, which then eſcaped the horrid, threatening lips of Bernardine and Goddard—

" *By the almighty ſaints above. that they would not delay an hour, in ſacrificing every thing to the honour and vengeance of their lord and maſter!!!*

Lady Iſabella immediately recognized the voices of Bernardine and Goddard.—She knew them—too fatally knew them

—to be the keen tools of their master's desperate purposes. A chilly sensation creeped through every limb. She retreated from the closet-door with silent horror—with unspeakable dread. Utterance was then impossible:—motion could scarcely afford its tardiest assistance. She retreated step by step. Even the silent rustling of her long sable mantle kindled terrors that shrunk her very soul. With difficulty, scarcely credible, she restrained herself from fainting;—for—oh! most agonizing were her fears—her tender—most tender feelings!—The idea, however, of her hitherto unwonted attempt to intrude upon the privacy of her Lord; the anger, moreover, she would heap upon herself in consequence thereof; and, superior to all these considerations, the hopes that she might, by some happy means, hereafter discover whom the threat was levelled at—at length proved the victors of her sex and her fears:—and, on this soothing impulse, and momentary transition of recollection, she retreated, unheard, to her solitary chamber.

What a melancholy interval of reflection here occurred!—Lady Isabella was not only too fatally acquainted with the inveterate temper of her Lord, but knew too well the savage dispositions of his followers at arms. She first saw the blow pointed to the bosom of her child, and once more beheld her (in imagination)

within the icy arms of Death. "Would to God," exclaimed ſhe, on the firſt reflection, in all the agonies of maternal diſtreſs and affliction,—" would to God that ſhe had then happily paſſed from mortal exiſtence to tranquil eternity!—and, not thus, from everlaſting joys, to worſe—far worſe, than death—perpetual infamy, and diſmal perſecution!"

And then, on a ſecond and a mature deliberation of thoſe dreadful chilling words:

" *By the almighty ſaints above, that they would not delay an hour, in ſacrificing every thing to the honour and vengeance of their lord and maſter!!!*"

What could ſhe poſſibly and ultimately conjecture thereupon?

Santa-Maria, happily (Iſabella conceived) was beyond their reach; nay, even the original purſuit had, by her maternal (I cannot ſay *artful)* perſuaſions, been given up—for, oh! what will not a fond mother do, or ſay, for a beloved—menaced child! —Who, then, was to be the ſacrifice of Count Rodolph's honor and vengeance?—Who?—if not the unfortunate Santa-Maria, the virtuous Lord Rinaldo! Conjecture—ſurmiſe—ſuſpicion—were all at ſtake, and Iſabella was reſolved to wait with patience —till time ſhould throw the uncertain and fatal dye.

After the Count had, for a time, indulged his ſavage proſpects in ſilence and the overgrown fulneſs of his heart, he entered

Lady Iſabella's apartment—and entered it with a ſmile of joy on his countenance!—This hypocriſy of demeanor impreſſed his wife with an idea, which ſhe had never entertained before——————————————————Her huſband ſhe always knew to be a man of violent meaſures—of great ambition—implacable hatred—and, ſince the ſuppoſed death of his ſon, Ferdinand, of unmoved ſeverity. But never, till now, could ſhe conceive that he was ſuch a cruel and accompliſhed——her ideas were on the point of ſtarting the word——————villain!!! but ſhe ſuddenly recollected that ſhe was—his wife! He had never, hitherto, given her occaſion for the horrid ſurmiſe. To her, he had ever been an indulgent huſband. She *might* be miſtaken!—Upon that reflection, ſhe awaited the hand of Time.

" It's true (thought Iſabella within herſelf) that my Lord has ever been kind to me; but to Santa-Maria—my poor, dear Santa-Maria!—he may not prove ſo!—nor, perhaps, to my almoſt equally beloved Rinaldo!——I will delay my thoughts for the preſent, haſty as they may be, though I have every reaſon, from what I have heard, to be ſuſpiciouſly on my guard—for Santa-Maria; though again, thank God! I think ſhe is now diſtant from her fatherly enemy!"

The Count retired early to his couch; and in the morning, meeting Bernardine

and Goddard in the hall, he let them ſecretly out of the poſtern:—the ſame poſtern through which maternal Tenderneſs, with a trembling hand, had ſo lately led Affliction, in fair Devotion's garb, ſupported by the ſtaff of patient Fortitude.

CHAPTER XII.

Between the acting of a dreadful thing
And the firſt motion, all the interim is
Like a phantaſma, or a hideous dream;
The genius and the mortal inſtruments
Are then in council; and the ſtate of man,
Like to a little kingdom, ſuffers then
The nature of an inſurrection.

He that ſtands upon a ſlipp'ry place
Makes nice of no vile hold to ſtay him up.—SHAKS.

RODOLPH, after this laſt interview with the diſconſolate, diſtracted Lady Iſabella, ſecluded himſelf from domeſtic ſociety. All his old ſervants, ſaving honeſt Droſs, were ever encountered with a frown; and as for Carlo and Sylvia, he could not look upon them with ordinary patience. All his hopes and ideas were now centered and employed in the return of Bernardine and Goddard: this ſubject entirely engroſſed his imagination, ſleeping or waking, ſitting or ſtirring.—Dreadful ſuſpence! pending, as it did, upon the clotted beam of kindred blood!

On the tenth day, however, after theſe ſame villains' departure, a ſpecial courier arrived at the Count's palace, with dif-

patches from the South. He knocked loudly at the gate, and with great haſte gave the ſubſequent letter to the porter, to be immediately delivered to his Lord, as it contained a matter of extraordinary importance. Rodolph, at this time, was in his cloſet; and after Droſi had delivered the ſame, he opened it with all the agitation that can poſſibly be ſuppoſed, from the violent conflict of mind that he was then labouring under.

To the moſt noble COUNT RODOLPH.

" AS a kinſman whom I greatly eſteem, it is urgently requeſted, for the honor and ſecurity of your hereditary caſtle and extenſive domains, that you would immediately ſet out for the South.—The Lord Rinaldo has not been ſeen, or heard of, for theſe *four days paſt*. An accident of an extraordinary nature muſt have diſpoſed both of himſelf, and his old companion, Manfredi.—No one has, of late, been ever ſeen to enter, or depart from, the caſtle. The great gate is cloſed, and no one can preſume to force it, till you arrive.—Haſte Count, therefore, on this unwelcome ſummons, to the South!

Bellito. D'ARCOS."

Nothing could exceed the aſtoniſhment of Rodolph, on the peruſal of this letter. —Bernardine and Goddard had not been departed more than ten days.—The journey, to and from Martorano, exceeded

that time, ſetting apart the neceſſary ſpace that they muſt unavoidably have had occaſion to employ in the execution of their embaſſy.—On reflection, however, the deed appeared as though accompliſhed, by ſome means or another; and it now was evident, almoſt beyond a doubt, that Rinaldo and Manfredi exiſted no longer.—Inflamed with this idea—panting, moreover, to take poſſeſſion of his kinſman's immenſe riches and ſtately caſtle—and not doubting, withal, but he ſhould meet Bernardine and Goddard, on their return homeward, he was determined to ſet off early in the morning, and therefore commanded Droſi to be prepared for a journey to the South, by dawn of day, to attend him to *his caſtle*.—Droſi ſtared with aſtoniſhment, when he heard this ſudden news; but fearful of making ſome of his old officious interrogations, ſilently retired.

Early in the morning, Rodolph, with Droſi, and a choſen few of his retinue, ſet off to take poſſeſſion of his caſtle in the South. During the whole courſe of his journey, he expected the trampling of every horſe's hoof to be thoſe of Bernardine and Goddard. Leſt he might have miſſed them on the road, he made private enquiries, not confiding, on this occaſion, *even in Droſi*. At every houſe of rendezvous he halted at, enquiries were made, by himſelf, whether any ſuch perſons had lately made any abode thither on their

way.—From the minute deſcriptions given of them, Lord Rodolph found that they had firſt been obſerved at *Nocera de Pagani* about nine leagues from Naples. When he reached Salerno, two leagues onward, his attention was arreſted, for a ſhort time, at the ſight of an immenſe number of peaſants on the margin of the bay, ſome dancing and playing. The major part, however, appeared more fixed upon another object, which, on approaching nearer, he diſcerned to be a conteſt between ſeveral ſmall veſſels off the bay, in the Tyrrhenian Sea. On enquiring the cauſe (mingling with this enquiry an air of ſurprize, particularly ſo, on ſeeing ſeveral tartanas beating againſt the ſhore, and naturally ſuppoſing, at the ſame time, ſome conflict then happening betwixt the natives and the corſairs of Barbary) he churliſhly received for anſwer, "That it was only a ſham-fight between ſome veſſels in the bay, at the expence, and by the command, of Philip, Count Contarini."—This reply, which came alike unexpectedly as uncouthly, in a moment converted his air of ſurprize to that of vexation and aſperity. "That Contarini (thought Rodolph, turning his horſe's courſe, and ſpurring him ſharply up the adjacent hill)—that this Lord Philip ſhould ſo overtop me in character and appearance, is more diſtreſſing to my aſpiring ſoul, than was I to mingle in the meaneſt, the very meaneſt

rank, of the Viceroy's army!—There, indeed, the loweſt file may ſtart forward to the poſt of honor:—the brave ſoldier, then, thinks not of his title, or his purſe.—But, when Rodolph thinks of Contarini, the profeſſed rival of his honor and of his houſe, thus vaunting forth upon the velvet down of opulence and proſperity, keeping the mouths of fools agape with pride and oſtentation, inflaming and torturing the very ſea with his ſuperficial ſhows!—then, again, Rodolph forgets his *ſuperior title*, and regretting, *damns the poverty of his purſe*.

This was the firſt, but not the only point of vexation, that overtook him in his way to Martorano Caſtle. For ſcarcely had he reached the aſcent of the neighbouring hill, when he diſcovered two divided battalions of horſe and foot, attacking and defending a heap of ruins, ſuppoſed once to have belonged to the ancient *Salernum*. On Rodolph's enquiring alſo the cauſe of this from the neareſt piquet, he received for anſwer, "That the battalions before him had been but newly levied, and that their reſpective generals were now marſhalling them, previous to their marching into Aſia." "And whoſe company (rejoined the Count) is that on the right, defending the ruins, and whoſe ſuperiority of ſize and ſplendid appearance, render them ſo much more and martially conſpi-

euous, than their fellow ſoldiers?" "That company, Signor (replied the out-poſt) is captained by the Lord Contarini;—and yonder he is himſelf, at the head of his troop, on the point, as I conjecture, of attacking the beſiegers upon their left flank. We know him, (concluded the piquet) above moſt of our other captains, by his ſuperior mien and ſplendid accoutrements." "Tortures and furies! (inwardly exclaimed the Count, wounded to the heart's core, at this mortifying eulogium paid, and not untruly ſo, to his bitter and ſucceſsful enemy) why have I been led into a ſecond track, that has thus croſſed and cut my pride and ambition to the very quick? On this he clapped his ſpurs cloſe upon the ſides of his charger, and puſhed him upon its utmoſt ſtretch, till he reached Evoli, a diſtance of ſix leagues from Salerno.

At Evoli, Bernardine and Goddard were recognized; alſo at Caſtro Villari, but at no other place. To his infinite mortification, none ſuch were elſewhere to be heard of; vexed and diſappointed, he haſtily proceeded to the ſmall Caſtella of the Chevalier D'Arcos, which lay about half a league ſouthward from Bellito, and another league from Martorano; where after meeting with the moſt hoſpitable reception, he was eaſily perſuaded to take up his reſidence for that night.

Here chagrin purſued Rodolph, with all

its baneful influence. He could learn no more from d'Arcos reſpecting the Lord Rinaldo, than what had been briefly related in his letter. What touched him, however, ſtill as ſorely, was the latter information he unwillingly acquired. For, on aſking the Chevalier reſpecting his nephew, the *Count Contarini*, Rodolph was informed as thus:

" My nephew (replied d'Arcos) is now prepared to attend the Viceroy, againſt the unprovoked enemies of his country. Previous to his departure from my caſtle, I amply furniſhed him with money, and one hundred men, fully equipped and accoutred.—All volunteers like himſelf, in the vice-regal cauſe. The youth, though naturally brave, and of the moſt undaunted mettle; is, I am ſorry to obſerve it, my Lord, raſh, vindictive, and malicious."

Here Rodolph frowned conviction.

" Prone to every debauchery, and inflamed with every luxury, that youth and the court can yield.—I need not allude to the great and implacable revenge his father bore to your houſe, and which, by his leſſons and perſuaſions, have deſcended to his ſon; ſeeds of animoſity that ſtill grow ſtronger as age increaſes, notwithſtanding all my pacific efforts to allay them.

" My ſon, Ferdinand, I fear, is the ſevereſt ſufferer by this family animoſity," thought Rodolph within himſelf, encreaſ-

ing the ſable frown that had already overſhadowed his dark yellow aſpect.

" For theſe ill-growing evils (concluded the chevalier) I have, by way of an oblivious antidote, enabled him thus to proceed with the Viceroy, in his view of penetrating into the very heart of Turkey, to revenge the repeated inſults and oppreſſions made on the houſe of Naples; hoping, that by time and reflection, he may eradicate thoſe baneful qualities, that have taken ſo deep a root in his youthful, and, I may add, his preſent depraved heart."

The force and propriety of d'Arcos' ſpeech, ſtruck the Count with the moſt prepoſſeſſing ſentiments in favour of his hoſt. He therefore gratefully thanked him for the goodneſs of his intentions towards himſelf and his houſe. A bitter thought, however, came acroſs him, which wrung his very ſoul—That the *hated Contarini*, was prepared to ſet out on his expedition, with great ſupplies of money, and 100 men at arms, when he had not procured a ſingle freſh recruit, pierced him to the very quick.—A happy thought, however, ſtarted itſelf on a ſudden, which relieved the greatneſs of his paſt anxiety. This ſame happy thought ſuggeſted to him, that he was on the eve of becoming poſſeſſor of the rich Caſtle and domains of his deceaſed kinſman, the Prince Rinaldo; the bare idea elevated his drooping ſpirits to

the zenith of exultation.—I will (conceived Rodolph) encreaſe my regiment to a double complement of men—will ſuit my equipage to the greatneſs of my rank—will alſo ſurpriſe our Viceroy with the greatneſs of my loyalty.—I will be accounted foremoſt in avenging our country's wrongs, and then return ten times richer in vengeance, honour, wealth and glory.

Poſſeſſed with theſe flattering proſpects, the Count became uncommonly cheerful and elated.—He called heartily for the goblet, and drank unſparingly. The hoſpitable Chevalier welcomed this friendly diſpoſition of his gueſt; his honeſt heart, however, on reflection, ſuggeſted that merriment was ill-ſuited to the appropriate melancholy of the occaſion.

Rodolph, having obſerved in the height of his hilarity, that he ſhould take poſſeſſion of Martorana Caſtle early in the morning; D'Arcos obſerved, that it would take ſome pains to effect an entrance—"the large caſtle-gate is ſhut—the ſurrounding foſſe is filled to its very top, from the influx of the rapid river Savuto;—ſaving indeed, the ſouth front part of the Caſtle, whoſe entrance is defended by the great gate.—The only poſſible means, therefore, of penetrating into the caſtle, muſt be effected by the means of a ſmall tartana on the weſt ſide of the fortreſs. On that ſite only, the thick walls have yielded to the iron

hand of Time; and there alone, the water is ſhallow and ſteady, from its conſtant evacuation into the ſmall loops, that have given way to its rapidity, and which have of late been neglected. My tartana which is now moored in the river Crati, that waſhes the rear of my Caſtella, will enable you to ford the ditch; though the ponderous ruins of the great eaſtern tower, that has lately concealed its proud head beneath the precipitate floods of Savuto, may render the paſſage ſomewhat dangerous. A ſcaling ladder, with grappling irons, which I can alſo conveniently provide you with, will enable you (in this ſole ſhattered part) to aſcend the once impenetrable ſides of this ancient and formidable caſtle. Reſiſtance from within is not to be looked for, as I have already not only ordered the bugle-horns to be ſounded, till they have re-echoed through and through the thick branches of the circumjacent foreſts, but alſo ſhot repeated arrows over the walls, on all ſides, with letters infixed, to learn ſome kind of information, from thoſe ſuppoſed to be ſo ſecretly encloſed within.—But have never ſeen mortal—even upon the higheſt turrets of the fortreſs.—Were there reſidents within, even but the ſcantieſt number—and thoſe prepared for defence;—no friendly or hoſtile intruſion could annoy them with impunity. Theſe circumſtances, my Lord, being duly weighed, we will

attempt this plan, let the conſequences and diſcoveries prove what they may. If the young Prince is found hereafter alive, then let us kneel to Heaven, and thank our omnipotent Being for his ſafety;—if not—let me then hail thee—Lord of Martorano Caſtle!!!"—

Though the welcome gratulation of—Hail! Lord of Martorano Caſtle, afforded Rodolph the moſt ſenſible pleaſure, ſtill all the obſervations of d'Arcos ſtruck the Count with this perplexing, complicated reflection:

That if it was ſo difficult for him, as the legal owner of Martorano Caſtle, to gain admiſſion, by what means could Bernardine and Goddard have entered, to accompliſh their ſanguinary deſigns?

Rodolph reflected on this enigmatical point over and over again, but could gather no clue whatever to ſatisfy his curioſity. Having ſifted his imagination for ſome minutes, he was interrupted by the good Chevalier, who miſinterpreting his thoughts, in the moſt anxious and friendly manner, obſerved—That the impediment he had repreſented was of little import, as it could be overcome by the ſetting of to-morrow's ſun.

The Count nodded conviction, and dropt the reflection, with this concluding idea:

That Rinaldo had been diſpoſed of, by ſome means or another, through the artifices of Bernardine and Goddard.

CHAPTER XIII.

But here it is; prepare
To ſee the life as lively mock'd, as ever
Still ſleep mock'd death; behold, and ſay, 'tis well.
Maſterly done,
The very life ſeems warm upon her lip.—
Thus are my bloſſoms blaſted in the bud!
And caterpillars eat my leaves away.—

SHAKSPEARE.

BY dawn of day, Count Rodolph and the noble Chevalier D'Arcos, attended by the greateſt part of his retinue, with the ſcaling-ladders and tartana, which was thrown acroſs a litter, and ſome old domeſtics, who had ſerved under him, in the warlike capacity of pioneers, proceeded on the other ſide of Martorano, to take poſſeſſion of Rinaldo's caſtle.—

They had not advanced above a mile from Bellito, when they obſerved the majeſtic caſtle of the loſt—unfortunate Rinaldo. It there appeared before them on one of the ſteepeſt rocks in all Italy. Its proud front ſtood full before their view: its ſides were defended by extenſive foreſts, that appeared envious of the lofty towers that overtopped their wondrous growth:—the murmuring breezes, however, ſhook their pride, and forced them to pay obedience to the neighbouring battlements—whilſt, as they approached, the daſhing billows of the rapid Savuto, could be diſtinctly heard reverberating againſt

the northern wall of this hardy and long-famed fortreſs.

D'Arcos having attained the weſtern ſide of the caſtle, ordered the tartana to be launched; and then, accompanied by the Count and the pioneers, they croſſed the foſſe, and with ſome difficulty affixed the ſcaling ladder, and made faſt the grappling irons to the mouldering wall———————This effected———Rodolph propoſed aſcending alone——The Chevalier, however, inſiſted on accompanying him, as well as the pioneers, leſt they ſhould not immediately find the great caſtle keys; in which neceſſity they ſhould be obliged to force and undermine the gates. "And —if my Lord—(anxiouſly obſerved the Chevalier, at this momentous criſis) our young and amiable kinſman, Prince Rinaldo, has been treacherouſly dealt with —(a circumſtance, I believe, but to be too fatally true) the villains, no doubt, have taken every method to fortify themſelves againſt immediate diſcoveries."

The Count made no reply to this touching obſervation. He now wiſhed that he had made Droſi acquainted with his infernal deſign—he wiſhed him much alſo to have been with him at this critical juncture. But Droſi was left on the other ſide of the foſſe, with the other domeſtics, whom he had already begun to regale with a haunch of veniſon, and ſome excellent lachryma-chriſti, that he had

brought with him, for fear of any unexpected delays.

Rodolph however, to conceal the agitation of his countenance (which the laſt obſervation of D'Arcos had made upon it) firſt aſcended the ladder, and after he had croſſed the broken wall, was followed by the Chevalier and his pioneers.

When Rodolph and D'Arcos had lodged themſelves ſecurely on the ramparts, the latter ordered his followers at arms to continue there, till they ſhould be ſummoned to the interior of the caſtle. The Count and Chevalier then deſcended to the inner court-yard, from thence to the great hall. The latter, perceiving his companion much exulted with the ſplendor and munificence of his hereditary acquiſition, complimented him—(though with every due reſpect to the late unfortunate owner) —on his ſudden and wealthy poſſeſſions —" Let us, however, (ſaid D'Arcos) loſe no time in contemplation of our ſurrounding grandeur, but aſcend to the apartment of my Lord Rinaldo, where we ſhall find the depoſitory of his immenſe riches —If it ſo happily chances that the ſpoilers of his life have not alſo been the deſpoilers of his property—"

On this, the Chevalier and Rodolph, poſſeſſed with far different ſenſations, aſcended the ſtair-caſe, and haſtening through the ſpacious corridor, ſoon found themſelves in the Prince's ſuite of apart-

ments. They firſt examined his bed-chamber—all was ſilent and gloomy there—not the leaſt traces of blood or pillage were to be perceived. The rich damaſk curtains, rendered ſtill far richer with the broad gold galoon that encircled them at every point, continued as they heretofore had ever done. They then entered thro' a ſmall door into the anti-chamber—The firſt objects here that repreſented themſelves to their view—were two immenſe iron cheſts, with their hinges disjointed—The ſtaples hung looſe, and the huge padlocks lay on the floor. One trunk had a plate of gold on the top, and the other, one of ſilver, with the arms of Rinaldo but freſhly engraved thereon. "Theſe cheſts, my Lord (ſaid D'Arcos, as he entered the room,) are doubtleſs the repoſitories of our kinſman's wealth and family records."

Rodolph eagerly opened the firſt—when—!!! to his infinite aſtoniſhment and horror, he beheld——a frightful vacuity—!!! The Chevalier was equally alarmed and ſurprized. He looked alſo into the cheſt, and perceiving ſomething gliſten at the bottom, he ſtooped and took it out. It was a portrait of Lord Rinaldo, encloſed in a caſe of rich diamonds—The melancholy portrait of the unhappy youth when he lay in all the agonies of death—His fine fair face was pale and waſted—His checks were ſunk, and his eyes were

lifted up with reſignation to that great Being whom he hoped ſoon to viſit in the bleſt regions of Heaven. D'Arcos, with a trembling hand, reſigned it to the Count: —that taſk performed, he retired on one ſide, and bedewed his cloak with the moiſt tear of ſenſible regret.

Rodolph, inſtead of regarding the portrait with pity, viewed it with horror inexpreſſible—Guilt ſtruck him to the very ſoul—his heart's blood became chilled, and both his mind and body experienced the bittereſt convulſions of doubt—remorſe—and terror.—The unaffected ſenſibility, however, of D'Arcos, became a mantle to his guilty ſenſations, and he poignantly endured them all, without laying himſelf open to the glance of an honeſt ſuſpicion.

The good Chevalier having recovered from his ſoft emotions of pity and regret, in an apparent cheerful manner, he turned round, and then obſerved, "Let us, my Lord, examine the other cheſt—The Count, on this, indignantly returned the portrait of the Prince to D'Arcos—"It is your's—" (ſaid Rodolph, with aſperity.) "Then I accept it—(returned the other) with gratitude and reſpect."

The Count, on this, proceeded to the other cheſt, and likewiſe——found all *empty* there.—Inſtead of expreſſing ſurpriſe and anger, as before, he now became on a ſudden ſilent and gloomy:—his faculties appeared abſorbed in extreme ſtupidity:

his hand took its courſe towards the handle of his ſword—Perceiving, however, a ſecond glittering beneath, he ferociouſly ſeized hold of it; and, on examination, diſcovered it to be the portrait of his—*daughter, Santa-Maria!!!*

Not reſembling that of Rinaldo's, wan and dejected, but full of joy and expectation. Or rather, as the aſtoniſhed father miſinterpreted, full of luſt and wantonneſs, Her beauteous countenance was replete with animation, and with eyes ſparkling like thoſe of a lovely and long-expecting bride.

Rodolph's indignation at this ſight exceeded all bounds:—he threw the picture from him—beat his head againſt the wall, and launched out into all thoſe accuſtomed incoherences which ever accompanied his actions in the moments of diſappointment.

The Chevalier took up the rejected portrait, and had ſcarce time to put it into his doublet, when he was horror-ſtruck with the ſight of Rodolph's drawn ſword ready pointed to his heart. He ran eagerly towards him, and with much difficulty wrenched the weapon from his furious graſp—Rodolph ſtormed with anger and diſappointment—he curſed himſelf—his fatal ſtars—and the Being who gave exiſtence to him, and to all thoſe with whom he had ever been conjoined. D'Arcos endeavoured to allay his wrath, but in

vain—It was ineffectual he ſaw, to adminiſter reaſon—

"The villains (inadvertently exclaimed the Count) have ruined—have plundered—have deſolated me!—"

"What villains, my Lord?"

"Thoſe villains, Bernar——" Here the Count ſuddenly checked himſelf.

"Speak on—do you know ought of them?"

"The villains—alas! would I could find the villains? Would to God we could, my Lord—"

Again Rodolph pauſed—trembled, not with fear, but rage. His ferocity at laſt gave way to prudence and reflection.—Then ſuddenly whirling his cloak round his face, he bedewed it with the big agonizing tear of enraged diſappointment.

The Chevalier, now moved more by the Count's anguiſh, than his former rage, adviſed him to be calm, till he had ſearched farther over the Prince's ſuite of apartments, which extended over all that part of the Caſtle. "The villains, yet (ſaid he) may have miſſed their booty. I will ſearch farther." Then carefully examining about the chamber, that no inſtrument of deſtruction was at hand, he hurried forward, with his kinſman's drawn weapon in his graſp, to make farther reſearches.

After D'Arcos had quitted Rinaldo's anti-chamber, Rodolph bitterly exclaimed —"Oh! yes—it muſt be ſo—thoſe villains

Bernardine and Goddard, have betrayed me——they have murdered the Prince and Manfredi;—have, by ſome infernal ſtratagem, diſpoſſeſſed the caſtle of its riches, and here left me a beggar—have deprived me of the ſubſtance, and left only the ſhadow behind—have erected their fortunes on my ruin: and, oh! what is ſtill more piercing—may defend their claim by title of their murderous embaſſy. I cannot accuſe them without expoſing my own life and honour.—But———— ———(recollecting himſelf after a ſhort pauſe) how could they have managed the deed, and deſpoiled the Caſtle of its wealth, ſo quickly?—Time will ſcarcely allow its probability. Some dæmons muſt have conveyed them hither on the wings of darkneſs; or how could they poſſibly and ſo eaſily have gained admiſſion into this till now inacceſſible fortreſs? when—— ———" Here he was interrupted by the return of D'Arcos—" My Lord—(ſaid he, on his entrance) I have made diligent ſearch over the whole range of Rinaldo's apartments, and not even the keys of the Caſtle can be diſcovered. We will, therefore, proceed to break open the great gate—Sentinels ſhall be placed round the ramparts, and in all the watch-towers. That performed, you ſhall return to my Caſtella, and continue there till we can trace out ſome channel, where the mur-

derers of our kinſman, and the marauders of your property can be diſcovered."

"That is impoſſible—"

"For why—my Lord?—"

"I will explain the matter to you, Chevalier, more fully this night—"

They then deſcended to the great hall—but as they walked onward, they diſcovered ſeveral lights at the extremity—— "What can that bright illumination mean (ſaid Rodolph anxiouſly) which reflects on the ſteps, that I recollect leads to the chapel?"

"Let us on and ſee, my lord," replied d'Arcos, with equal anxiety.

On this, they precipitately haſted forward, and, aſcending the flight of ſteps, ſoon found themſelves in the chapel; the ſides of which were all of black marble.

The pavement contained little pieces of jaſper, porphry, ſerpentine, and marble of divers colours, which formed compartments quite different from one another; and though in ſome places worn, it ſtill ſhowed the ſigns of ancient grandeur.

The ſight of this ſuperb little edifice of ſanctity and worſhip afforded no immediate ſatisfaction to Rodolph; another object of more importance attracted his deepeſt attention—which was momentarily ſtruck with the number of brilliant tapers that ſtood burning on the altar, and apparently as though but freſhly kindled.—

"This is ſtrange, my friend—"

" Wondrous ſtrange, my Lord—"

" How can theſe tapers, D'Arcos, be preſerved ſo freſh, ſo brilliant, when there is no mortal exiſting in the Caſtle, to replace and renovate them?"—

" I cannot account for the myſtery, indeed, my noble kinſman"—

" Then—(ſaid Rodolph, after a ſhort pauſe, and with that quickneſs of thought and penetration which marked the leading features of his character) I will extinguiſh them, and ſee if they are re-illumined when we return hither in the morning."—

" Hold, my Lord—will not this deed ſavour of ſacrilegious diſreſpect to the holy images that ſurround us?"—

" Pſhaw!—(ſneeringly, replied Rodolph) Why this objection, Chevalier, ſavours more of a monkiſh diſpoſition than that of an old warrior." On this, he twiſted the corner of his mantle together, and extinguiſhed all the tapers one by one, and that—with all the unconcern which characterized his unthinking, inflexible, and undaunted temper—

Scarce had the Count extinguiſhed the holy tapers, when ſome voices were diſtinctly heard—vociferating—" My Lord D'Arcos—which way is our Lord D'Arcos—Rodolph inſtantly ſnatched his ſword from the graſp of his kinſman, and bidding him to draw his own, they deſcended the chapel ſtairs, and haſtily advanced to

the ſpot from whence the noiſe proceeded —where they ſoon diſcovered the pioneers in the centre of the Hall—ſtanding abreaſt, with no ſmall degree of anxiety and alarm depictured in their countenances.

" What means this ſudden appeal? (exclaimed the chevalier)—Is there any freſh adventure at hand or abroad?"

" Nothing ſo very particular, my Lord (anſwered Martin, for himſelf and his comrades)—but as we ſtood waiting your commands on the ramparts, we were ſuddenly alarmed with a loud noiſe, that ſeemed to proceed from the foreſt, on the eaſtern ſide of the Caſtle.—The clamour favoured more of humour and jollity than any thing elſe.—We looked with all our eyes, but could diſtinguiſh nothing, from the thickneſs of the wood. We, therefore, thought it our duty to warn your lordſhips of the ſame, and having held a long, and moſt deliberate council on the affair, it was unanimouſly agreed that we ſhould leave our poſts, without general orders, and deſcend in ſearch of your Lordſhips."

Rodolph and the Chevalier, accompanied by the pioneers, with drawn ſwords, haſtened through the extenſive court-yards, and intricate windings of the caſtle, till they reached the great gate, which was with infinite labour and difficulty broke open. When effected, they diſcovered, to their infinite amazement, the real cauſe

of this dreadful alarm.—For on the other ſide of the foſſe, were ſeen Droſi and all the Chevalier's domeſtics, placed in battle array—though ſo much intoxicated with the lachryma-chriſti that they had imbibed, as to render it a ſubject of prudence for them to form themſelves into a cloſe phalanx, to keep ſteadily together. When Droſi, however, diſcovered the features of his maſter, he waved his cap, which was a ſignal previouſly given by him, for the others to ſet up a loud huzza!—Huzza!—huzza!—huzza!—re-echoed through the foreſts. Rodolph and the Chevalier, notwithſtanding all the unfavourable occurrences that they had ſo momentarily experienced, could not refrain from ſmiling, at this groteſque behaviour and appearance of their domeſtics.—The pioneers laughed heartily, particularly at the droll geſtures and deportment of the captain of this Bacchanalian group.—When the Count, however, appeared, Droſi waved his cap again, and they each falling on one knee, vociferouſly exclaimed—Hail! Lord of Martorano Caſtle.--Rodolph, on this, half pleaſed and half angry, ſmiling and frowning together; pleaſed with the fellow's innocent drollery, which he attributed, and rightly ſo, to his affection and attachment to his perſon and fortunes, but ſtill irritable from the diſappointment he had experienced—ſternly commanded Droſi to leave off his

buffoonery, to riſe, and follow him to the Caſtella of the Chevalier d'Arcos.

CHAPTER XIV.

An apple cleft in two is not more twin
Than theſe two creatures.

SHAKSPEARE.

WHAT with the unexpected adventure in the chapel, and Droſi's drunken, miſchievous frolics; the Count and Chevalier had ſo far forgot themſelves, as to neglect not only placing centinels about the ramparts and towers of the Caſtle, as had been propoſed, but to leave the great gate open; the ſcaling ladder on the wall, and the tartana riding in the foſſe.

As it was rather late in the evening, when they arrived at the Chevalier's Caſtella, the ſupper had already been prepared. Lauria, the niece of D'Arcos, according to her uſual cuſtom, was in the hall, buſily overlooking the female domeſtics, in providing her uncle's ſupper.—When the damſel, however, diſcerned the entrance and commanding figure of Rodolph, ſhe would have retired. The Chevalier nevertheleſs requeſted her to ſtay, and then introduced his Niece to the Count.—The elegance of her mien, the beauty of her countenance, and the modeſty of her deportment, reminded the latter of his loſt, fugitive, Santa-Maria. The ſtrong reſemblance they bore to each other

in every diſtinct point, drew a heavy ſigh from his boſom. He deſpondently approached the amiable Lauria with a kinſman's reſpectful fondneſs, and joined his wiſhes to thoſe of his kind hoſt.

Rodolph ſcarcely partook of any food, though, agreeably to his old cuſtom, when adverſity puſhed cloſely upon him, he drank freely. The Chevalier, with infinite emotion, diſcovered the frequent glances that his gueſt beſtowed on Lauria, and the apparent anguiſh he experienced at every look. He eaſily divined the cauſe from whence they ſprung. He had heard of his daughter's reverſe fortunes, from his kinſman, Contarini, and with an exaggeration that made her guilt, though almoſt incredible, ſtill diſputable. This family miſfortune became the ſubject of that letter which brought Droſi the violent blow he had received for his officious and untimely interrogatories. Condolence, indeed, prefaced the epiſtle—Though an honeſt propoſal ſucceeded of ſuffering Santa-Maria to take up a retired abode at his manſion, till the myſtery of her pregnancy could be elucidated. The fatal cauſe of this domeſtic torture, had been alſo exaggerately attributed to Rinaldo, by the artful Contarini (though ſecretly ſo) for which reaſon d'Arcos had cautiouſly forebore to ſpeak much of the Prince; but when the neceſſity of the ſubject could not prevent his name being brought forward—then, indeed, not-

withſtanding all the imputations of ſeduction that had been laid to his charge (a crime that, of all, he moſt abhorred) the partiality he bore for his great virtues, and, till now, unblemiſhed purity of mind and manners, could not prevent him from affixing the words of affection and reſpect to his name and character.

The ſupper being removed, and the beautiful Lauria having retired, her uncle attended with ſilence, to hear the motives that had rendered it impoſſible for his noble kinſman's reſiding in the hereditary caſtle.

CHAPTER XV.

——To wilful men,
The injuries that they themſelves procure
Muſt be their ſchool maſters—
—— How he gliſtens
Through my dark ruſt! and how his piety
Does my deeds make the blacker!

SHAKSPEARE.

RODOLPH, perceiving his hoſt's ſuſpenſe, after ſome pauſe, thus relieved his anxiety:—

"Some little time after the intended nuptials of my daughter with Rinaldo—the abrogation of which, I ſuppoſe, Sir Chevalier, you muſt be acquainted with by this period?"

Here D'Arcos only anſwering with a ſigh of condolence, Rodolph immediately caught the affirmation, and then proceeded:—

" I perceive it is even ſo! Slander hath the wings of a lark, and ſoars beyond our hearing and our ſight. Soon, then, Sir Chevalier, after that event, the Viceroy ſent for me to his preſence, appointing me to the command of a mutilated regiment, to be ready, in a ſhort ſpace of time, to march, fully equipped, and with its former full complement of men, alſo, againſt the vindictive Turk. I ſhall paſs over the encomiums he paid to my former ſervices, and to the zeal I had ever manifeſted towards my country and his Viceroyalty. When I became informed of Rinaldo's extraordinary abſence from his caſtle—(the cauſe of which you have attributed to ſome foul, unnatural deed—and which I indeed ſuppoſe to be but too fatally founded in truth) - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - Excuſe theſe emotions!——The dreadful idea overpowers me! - - - - - - - - - -"

And here - - - - -

The Count covered his face with this cloak—not to conceal the emotions of regret, but the glaring and impulſive colours of bluſhing—irreſiſtible guilt.

" To continue however:—When I was informed of my kinſman's fate, the ſervices I owe my country, and the Vice-regent power, fondly led me to imagine that I might now ſerve with treble zeal and ardour—and that, by the acquiſition of my *dear departed* kinſman's wealth, I might not only add to the fame and ſplendor of our

houſe, but, by the immolation alſo of ſome thouſand infidel legions, make my prayers more acceptable above, for his eternal happineſs."

Had the really pious Chevalier poſſeſſed the ſlighteſt ſuſpicion that Rodolph had been the moſt diſtant author of attempting and plotting the deſtruction of Rinaldo, this laſt expreſſion of hypocriſy and impiety would have harrowed up his ſoul. The Count, however, knew ſcarcely any thing of pure religion, but by name; and even the ſcanty knowledge of her excellencies that he poſſeſſed, better deſerved the title of ſuperſtition:—for, like moſt of the leading Captains engaged in this, and other ſanguinary conteſts of thoſe dark ignorant times, his mind was more engroſſed by a brutal valour, and a perpetual thirſt for plunder, than any fixed religious conſideration.

"But how reverſe," continued Rodolph, "has fortune proved!—I poſſeſs a caſtle, it is true, but deſtitute of thoſe means to cheriſh and maintain its ancient fame and ſplendor. Pillaged of its immenſe reſources:—its late Lord, and great wealth, removed by murderers and robbers;—nay, as it hitherto appears, not even one ſingle man of his magnificent retinue remains behind—How they could all have been diſpoſſeſſed and deſtroyed, confounds and diſtracts my diſappointed ſoul!"

" That point I can reſolve, my Lord, —Rinaldo's retinue has not been all deſtroyed: his men at arms I can partly account for. As for Paul, and all his domeſtic favourite ſervants, I cannot poſſibly ſurmiſe what can have become of them, more than of their young Lord! Their fate, however, appears interwoven with his own and Signior Manfredi's.

" But, to proceed:—When Count Contarini came to the South, it was my great exertions that procured him followers.—I raiſed him ſeventy men at arms; thirty only remained to ſatisfy his eager hopes and glowing ambition. Diſappointment was furiouſly depictured on his countenance, when I intimated to him that I had done my utmoſt to promote his honor and his wiſhes. He thereupon left me churliſhly, and authoritatively exclaimed at his departure, " that the remainder he muſt have—and would have—to make up his complement of a hundred!"—The inſolence of his ſpeech and manners confounded me; but ſtill, as I had launched his little bark on the ocean of Fortune myſelf, and unwilling that it ſhould be crippled for lack of a few more hands to weather it through the uncertain viciſſitudes of a perilous voyage, I inſtantly repaired to Martorano Caſtle——"

" To Rinaldo's Caſtle! Sir Chevalier?"

" Even ſo, my Lord."

" And did Rinaldo aſſiſt the enemy of our houſe—the moſt inveterate, the moſt implacable Count Contarini?"

" Liſt, and have patience!—He aſſiſted me, and me only.—Now hear and admire the generous conduct of Rinaldo!—For, when I related to him the ſeveral circumſtances that thus agitated my mind (excuſe my weakneſs here, ariſing, as it does, from the natural—almoſt unaccountable affection, notwithſtanding all his vices, that I muſt ever bear for an only brother's ſon!)—Rinaldo gave me this brief reply:—

" Sir Chevalier,

" I have always admired your known great virtues and proverbial good qualities, as much as I have condemned the vices and profligacies of your nephew. You are not accountable, though you muſt naturally feel for his actions and indiſcretions, but rather, like a ſtar of pre-eminent luſtre, diminiſh them by your ſuperior effulgence. The Contarinis have been the profeſſed enemies of Rodolph's houſe (a houſe the neareſt and deareſt to my heart) and, alas! I fear their inveteracy has afforded that family anxieties diſtreſſing and afflicting. There is nothing, believe me, my ſoul more abhors than kindred malice and perſecution; and we have both heard and ſeen ſo many fatal examples of theſe unnatural bitter animoſities, as to make every feeling Chriſtian boſom endeavour

to quench, rather than add deſtructive fuel to the cruel flame. An unexpected honeſt kindneſs (diveſted of all ſelfiſh, mean, intereſted views) therefore, may produce conviction,—conviction, repentance, re—pentance, gratitude, and a conſciouſneſs of having been precipitately led away by the fallibility of our natures, and the depravity of the human mind—All theſe reflections combined, may probably and ultimately effect an everlaſting re-union of ſentiment—love—and ancient family affection.

" With theſe happy views, therefore (concluded Rinaldo) honour me with a viſit, Sir Chevalier, in the courſe of two days, and I will ſupply you with the deficiency of men you have to raiſe."

" To be brief, my Lord, I took my departure for that time; and when I returned to the Caſtle on the appointed day, I found the exact number of promiſed men, drawn up in the outer court-yard, equipped from head to foot. Surpriſed and pleaſed at this inſtance of active generoſity, I ran into his arms, and expreſſed the deepeſt emotions of gratitude. " Do not thus oppreſs me (ſaid the noble youth); for the brave fellows you behold before you, have been long weary of the inactive life that they have led of late in my cheerleſs Caſtle. They were the undaunted followers of my departed ſire, and pant

to engage in the patriotic war, againſt the cruel enemies of our faith. Oh! cheerfully do I reſign them to my virtuous kinſman—(for ſuch, though flattering and undeſerving, my Lord, were all his words on this occaſion) you will be the means of ſending them onward to victory and glory —ſucceſs and honour accompany them all —aye, to all, and all, who never flinch from their country's cauſe! May conqueſt wreathe its deareſt laurels round their brows! It is true, my faithful fellows (addreſſing himſelf with uncommon energy to his armed retinue) you have loſt a young inexperienced maſter; but there (pointing to me) you have found one—aged—and experienced, one who will appoint you ——(Here Rinaldo pauſed——) a *valiant* —captain—"

D'Arcos, without obſerving the agitation of Rodolph's countenance (ſo deeply were his feelings interwoven with his ſubject) thus continued:

"Still amazed and pleaſed with this diſintereſted generous conduct, nevertheleſs, I could not refrain from arguing with Rinaldo, to give the affair a more deliberate conſideration. You cannot—(I exclaimed) thus rob your wealthy and magnificent Caſtle of its ſtrongeſt bulwark.—Retain the one half for your own ſafety and defence. In theſe rude times, it may become the envy and attack of rough deſpoilers. Not only your riches, but your

perſon may be rendered the objects of their invaſions and brutality. I beſeech you, therefore, do but retain the only one half, for my ſake and happineſs.

My Lord Rinaldo, however, continued inflexible to all my remonſtrances—" I thank you kindly, Sir Chevalier (ſaid the noble youth) for your friendly ſolicitude in my behalf.—Manfredi, and a few ancient choſen domeſtics, will be all that I ſhall now require. The world is loſt to me, and I ſhall ſoon be loſt to the world. Seek not, my worthy D'Arcos (concluded the Prince, on perceiving me to attempt to ſpeak) to learn farther—I have been deprived of all that was moſt dear, and the whole earth now appears in my ſight a vaſt and miſerable vacuity."

" On this he took of me an affectionate and *laſt* farewell, for never have I beheld him ſince."

After ſome moments' ſilence, Rodolph, with affronted haughtineſs, exclaimed—

" Methinks, Sir Chevalier, you have not ſpared encomiums on my guilty kinſman!"

" I will not diſpute a father's feelings (tenderly replied D'Arcos)—forgive me, my Lord, if I have erred. Rinaldo may be guilty—I cannot defend his faults—though I cannot, from my ſoul, refrain from praiſing his virtues. I will admit that he may be guilty, and, as ſuch, I

will alſo ſay, that, of all mankind, he is the moſt guiltleſs, amongſt the huge record of the guilty."

The Count, on this, roſe from his ſeat, and walked to and fro with haſty ſtrides. —He endeavoured to reflect on what had eſcaped d'Arcos;—reflection, however, failed him, for the more he thought, the deeper became the myſtery.

The Chevalier, too conſcious of Rodolph's haſty and incoherent temper, ſuffered this momentary impulſe of paſſion to take its vent. When the Count, however, had reſumed his ſeat, he thus once more addreſſed his haughty gueſt:

" I have now another ſubject to diſcloſe, my Lord, more important to your happineſs and honour, than what I have juſt briefly related:—It ſhall be ſtill in your power to obey the Viceroy's requeſt, and depart for the wars with twice the ſplendor of Philip Count Contarini.—Be not ſurpriſed, For—"

(Rodolph, ever attentive to the mighty call of ambition, drew his ſeat cloſe to that of the Chevalier's, that not a word might eſcape him, on a point ſo welcome, ſo gladdening to his ear)—" The purpoſe can and ſhall be eaſily accompliſhed. A very few days ſince, a courier arrived at my gate, and left a large pondrous leathern bag, with my name ſuperſcribed thereon, and rode off without waiting for an anſwer. The man immediately brought

it to me, as I was ſitting with my niece, Lauria, in this apartment; and when I opened the ſame, to my great ſurpriſe, it contained four thouſand crowns;—my aſtoniſhment was exceſſive.—I immediately conjectured that I owed the gift to the liberality of Rinaldo.—Ordering my horſe, I as inſtantly rode to the Caſtle, but could neither obtain admiſſion, or make any one anſwer, to the loud and repeated ſhouts I gave, for the great gate was ſhut; I therefore diſappointedly returned home, and diſpatched my ſervants on the different croſs roads, to gain ſome information of the courier, from the deſcription given to me, of him by the ſentinel. No horſeman however, of that account had paſſed the roads, either direct or croſs way.—*After* this ſtrange and perplexed event, I almoſt rode hourly to and fro, to the Caſtle, and finding every thing as at firſt, I then diſpatched a meſſenger to your palace, in Naples."

" By holy Saint Mark (exclaimed the aſtoniſhed Count) myſtery hangs on myſtery moſt marvellouſly!"

D'Arcos then roſe from his ſeat, and taking the leathern bag out of a private cloſet, put it into the hands of Rodolph.

" There, my Lord (continued the Chevalier) you will find the ſum untouched. This will, in a great meaſure, enable you to fulfil your duties as a faithful Neapolitan, a renowned captain, and a zealous,

valiant advocate of your country's unprovoked quarrels. As my friend and kinſman, you muſt accept it. That ſum, however, may not exactly complete your noble and laudable deſign. I can add two thouſand crowns more, without injuring myſelf or family, which, added to the ſum promiſed from the public purſe, will enable you to advance forward on your expedition, equal to the greatneſs and ſplendor of your rank and courage.—Hold, my Lord, one ſentence more and I have done;—time will develope, on ſome future day, the myſtery that hangs over the fate of Rinaldo, and his moſt ſhamefully plundered Caſtle. Heaven does not ſuffer murder and ſacrilege to go for ever undiſcovered. An hair-breadth event, often brings the moſt ſecret crime to light; on that allwiſe and interfering Power, therefore, let us both depend. The finger of man may point the arrow of ſuſpicion againſt each other; but the finger of God alone is able to point out thoſe ſecret, foul, and murderous deeds which for a time have often lain obſcured; but which on ſome future, though diſtant period, the omnipotence of Heaven never fails to bring into lightneſs, to ſhame, and puniſhment.——If that day arrives (and oh! God grant it one day may) within the ſcanty remains of our lives; you may repay me the laſt two thouſand crowns—the other four thouſand came to me by chance;

—happily ſent me to aſſiſt (in *your* repreſentation) our king and country. Of that I make no account, it is a dedication to courage and virtue. The nobleſt ſacrifice a Neapolitan can ever make. But if, on the contrary (and oh! may Heaven avert the contradiction) this myſtery extends beyond the ſpan of our exiſtence, the laſt two thouſand may be reſtored, by teſtament, to my heireſs, my ſole heireſs, my dearly adopted child, Lauria."

The Count was ſo ſtruck with this unexpected generoſity and candour from D'Arcos, that he continued ſilent for ſome time. After a few moments reflection, he thus as candidly and honourably, replied to the chevalier:

" Sir Knight, I accept of the ſix thouſand crowns, on this ſole condition. Nay, let me be heard,—I have not interrupted *you*—for, on the honour of a ſoldier, and as much I eſteem my fame and my word, I will not retract what I am now about to ſay—In compenſation of theſe ſix thouſand borrowed crowns—"

" Two thouſand, my Lord."

" Well then, Sir Chevalier, let it be two thouſand. I will deliver over to you the Caſtle of Rinaldo. Mark me, I do not offer that as a pledge; your acceptance, on the contrary, will only tend to its honour and ſecurity. It will prove a mutual advantage; I ſhall immediately prepare my regiment for their intended

expedition. I have only one now remaining that is dear to me—The Lady Iſabella. With her, I ſhall leave only two young domeſtics; the others I ſhall take with me to the wars. Theſe ſolid terms you cannot reject. In friendſhip to us all, immediate compliance is neceſſary. A weak woman cannot defend the Caſtle, ſtrong as it is, in every part; my wife will, therefore, remain at her palace, in Naples, where ſhe can reſide in calm ſecurity."

The Chevalier D'Arcos, without the leaſt heſitation, acceded to theſe indiſputable, and, we may add, honourable terms. It was therefore mutually agreed upon, that in the morning, according to the old feudal cuſtom, he ſhould take a limited poſſeſſion of Martorano Caſtle.

CHAPTER XVI.

'Tis wondrous ſtrange, the like yet never heard of;
Either forbear,
Quit preſently the chapel, or reſolve you
For more amazement, if you can behold it.

SHAKSPEARE.

COUNT Rodolph and the Chevalier D'Arcos, with their reſpective domeſtics, ſet out for Martorano Caſtle by dawn of day. Droſi (by a ſpecial beckon from his Lord) accompanied him cloſe on horſeback, and with whom he ſhared the principal part of his converſation—during

which he received the ſtricteſt injunctions that he ſhould be always at hand, and ready to receive the ſlighteſt commands.

When they had attained the acclivity of the ſteep rock which led to the Caſtle, they were ſurpriſed, nay, momentarily thunderſtruck, to behold the great gate apparently—almoſt indiſputably ſhut

"This is ſtrange again, moſt wondrous ſtrange," obſerved Rodolph.

"Still ſtranger and ſtranger, my Lord, (replied D'Arcos)—but let us proceed to the weſtern ſide of the Caſtle; where, at all events, we can gain admiſſion as before."

"But who (obſerved Rodolph, with his ſable brow knitted to the nethermoſt depth of reflection)—who could have thus cloſed the gate in our abſence? All this is ſtrange, very ſtrange indeed;—all theſe collateral circumſtances, Sir Chevalier, muſt have proceeded from ſome ſecret, recluſe habitants within."

"But where can they be (replied D'Arcos)—where can they be concealed?"

"Heaven knows," returned Rodolph.

"And I believe *only* knows (anſwered the Chevalier); let us, however (continued he) await the event of futurity—the myſtery is ſtrange—at preſent apparently unſearchable;—let us proceed, however."—When, therefore, they had reached the weſtern ſide of the Caſtle, the ſcaling ladder, which through the oblivious an-

xiety of the moment, had been left depending on the ſhattered wall—was miſſing.

" Where could that have gone, and how? (furiouſly exclaimed Rodolph)—Moreover (added he) where is the tartana we left floating on the ſurface of the foſſe?"

" The influx of the river Savuto (rejoined D'Arcos, ever anxious to place a thin veil over the intricate countenance of myſtery) may have forced it into her rapid ſtream. Let us, therefore, ride toward the northern ſide of the Caſtle; and in the mean time (addreſſing himſelf to Martin, who was cloſe at hand)—go you to my Caſtella, and bring my other ſmall tartana, and another ſcaling ladder, which you will find hanging near the armoury, in the outer hall.

When they had rode to the northern part of the Caſtle, and reached the margin of the river Savuto, they almoſt immediately recognized the ſcattered planks of the tartana—partly floating on the ſurface of the ſtream, and partly daſhing againſt this impenetrable part of the fortreſs.

" Thus (ſaid D'Arcos) the loſs of the tartana, at leaſt, is palpably accounted for."

" But how (rejoined the Count) can the other events be accounted for? The great gate cloſed, &c. &c."

It was thus they paſſed their time in

this perplexing argument, till Martin arrived with another tartana, and a ſcaling ladder. They then aſcended the battered wall, as before, not leaving one ſingle man behind. The pioneers were immediately ordered once more to force the great gate, whilſt Droſi was appointed the temporary captain of his comrades.

During this interval, Rodolph ſaid to the Chevalier, "Let us proceed to the chapel, and ſee if the tapers I laſt night extinguiſhed are re-illumined."

Droſi, alſo, ſeeing his Lord advance one way, with a view (as he conjectured) of ſettling ſome affair of concern and importance, gave a ſignal to his comrades, and putting himſelf at their head, ordered a quick march, and immediately proceeded on a different courſe.

"My mind miſgives me (obſerved D'Arcos, as they ſtretched along the hall) but I think they muſt be re-illumined, from the ſame light reflecting, as it did before, on the ſteps which lead to the chapel."

"It ſo appears to me alſo (rejoined the Count) but no matter—let us go on—I am already too well prepared for myſtery, and too firmly caſed, for fear or danger."

They then aſcended the chapel ſtairs, and as they unfolded the door, diſcovered ——all the tapers brighter and longer

than they had found them on the preceding evening.

" By holy Saint Peter (inſtantly exclaimed the Chevalier) this is a myſtery indeed!!!"

" Tuſh—myſtery forſooth! (returned the Count, contemptuouſly) Pſhaw! There muſt be ſome one concealed in the Caſtle. It is human agency that effects theſe myſteries, and not a ſupernatural one."

" Then let us ſearch it all over (replied D'Arcos) and endeavour to unravel the ſtrangeneſs of theſe myſteries."

" We will—we will—(anſwered Rodolph, unſheathing his ſword with uncommon impetuoſity) and damned be he who firſt comes acroſs my vengeance!"

On this, they precipitately deſcended the chapel ſtairs, and directed their ſteps once more upward, to the apartments of Rinaldo.

After they had ſearched over all the upper, and all the moſt intricate parts of the Caſtle, they once more deſcended, ſlowly and diſappointedly, to the great hall; and from thence proceeded to the refectory; as they reached, however, the lower ſteps, they diſtinguiſhed a clamorous noiſe from below. They liſtened with anxiety and attention—the noiſe ceaſed—they then proceeded with ſlow ſteps, and endeavoured to purſue what they had heard. As they advanced, the noiſe changed. Inſtead of clamour, as

heretofore, they diſtinguiſhed an exchange of the moſt dulcive nature. For, here their ears were ſtruck with the celeſtial ſounds of the *Heaven-born lute.* They followed the muſic (tuned by the divine arm of Cecilia) but ſcarce had they aſcended a ſcore of ſteps or ſo, when they diſcovered a pannel in the wainſcot, half open (which never before nor perhaps would now have caught their attention, had it not been for a plain reaſon, which will ſhortly be evidenced) from whence their ears were again aſſailed by the moſt vociferous ſhouts of apparent humour, and too apparent inebriety.

" There are robbers in the Caſtle (exclaimed the Chevalier) ſome banditti—and doubtleſs the deſtroyers and murderers of Lord Rinaldo's life and his immenſe properties."

" Huſh—(replied Rodolph) they are no robbers—no banditti—hark—cannot you diſtinguiſh the voice of my old ſervant, Droſi? This avenue leads to ſome cellar which he has diſcovered, well ſtored, I warrant ye, with ſome choice lachryma chriſti, or the true falernian. Liſt—it is his voice—I know it full well, and we will purſue it—"

Scarce, however, had they deſcended a narrow flight of ſteep winding ſtairs, when they were irreſiſtibly ſtopt by a repetition of the harmonious lute——The ſounds, ſo

heavenly and attractive, perched them immediately on the ſtair—which they were preparing to quit.

" What harmony like this—(obſerved the Chevalier) can lay concealed within the Caſtle-walls?

" If the exquiſite ſounds really ſpring from ſome ſecret ſource, and that within the Caſtle-walls, they muſt be diligently ſearched after—that ſome inhabitant, however, clandeſtinely abides here, there cannot remain the ſhadow of a doubt. The chapel muſt be an indiſputable proof of this; and the ſoft muſic that has faſtened on our ears confirms my ſuſpicions. Let us deſcend, therefore, Sir Chevalier, and ſatisfy theſe doubts."

Rodolph and his companion then haſtened to the cellar, down a flight of about a hundred ſteps, where ſat Droſi and all his comrades, with ſeveral flagons of wine before them, and all liſtening attentively, moſt, however, with great agitation, at the unexpected ſounds of this exquiſite harmony.

When they had all roſe, and become uncovered, Rodolph queſtioned Droſi how he came there, after the particular injunctions he had laid upon him to be always prepared, and near his perſon?

Droſi replied, " That he really thought his Lord and the Chevalier were about to tranſact ſome buſineſs of importance before the latter took poſſeſſion of the Caſ-

tle. Recollecting, therefore, that this cellar was formerly ſtored with the choiceſt wines of Italy, I thought that we might ſpend a few leiſure minutes here more pleaſantly than wandering about the ramparts—Some good-natured hoſpitable ſouls, it ſeems, were of the ſame opinion; for they have not only provided us with ſome good wine, as your Lordſhip may ſee, but have alſo been entertaining us with the choiceſt muſic, by way of accompaniment to our excellent beverage."

"How came you to know the paſſage to this cellar—or that ſuch a cellar exiſted in the Caſtle?"

"Why, if your Lordſhip recollects, when you was on a viſit ſome years ago to the late prince Rinaldo, he held a jubilee for ſeveral days in this Caſtle. I was not backward to promote the ſport, whilſt the lachryma-chriſti was circulated ſo briſkly about. One night, however (though I cannot well account for ſuch a thing happening) I chanced, by ſome ſtrange fatality or another, to imbibe more than I could conveniently carry, and fell faſt aſleep in one corner of the refectory. When I awoke, however, I roſe and endeavoured to grope my way to the ſtairs; but in creeping forward, I ſtumbled againſt the wainſcot, and it inſtantly gave way—Down I rolled as inſtantly from the top of thoſe high flight of ſteps you have juſt de-

ſcended. I ſhall never forget it, for I thought as I pitched over and over like a wine caſk, I never ſhould have got to the bottom of my deſtination. Here, however, I arrived at laſt, covered with bruiſes from head to foot; and what is more extraordinary, ſoberer than ever I was in my life. When I got up, and looked about me, I began to gueſs, from the number of flagons that ſurrounded me, my misfortune was not ſo great and afflicting as I might have expected. Feeling my ſpirits, therefore, exhauſted with the violence of my fall, I uncorked one of the flagons, and ſoon afterwards found myſelf ſo far recovered, that I could aſcend with tolerable eaſe and pleaſure to myſelf.—That I might not, however, forget the ſpot where I had ſo nearly endangered my life and my limbs (and which I might very eaſily have done from the cloſeneſs of the aperture of the wainſcot, and its being ſo apparently, to the eye of a ſtranger, connected with each other) that I took out my ſword, and with its point marked a ſmall (d) on the other ſide of the door."

It was with the greateſt impatience that Rodolph heard Droſi through his curious drunken adventure; and which, though highly probable, from his ſtrange conduct and diſpoſition, was ſomewhat of a marvellous tendency.

" Well, Sir (ſaid the Count) as you

have accounted for one myſtery, know you aught of this muſic?"

"Not a ſyllable, my Lord.—I never heard any muſic here before, though I viſited this cellar many a time and oft, after the roll I had down the ſteps, but the favourite muſic indeed of uncorking the flagons."

Rodolph, on this, ordered them all to aſcend, and attend him in the hall, till he followed. The Chevalier and him then ſearched all over the cellar, to endeavour if they could diſcover any farther ſecret progreſs—but not the ſlighteſt proſpect of one was to be found—After this ſearch—the muſic reſumed its plaintive—dulcive ſounds;—it was, however, for a few moments only, and ſeemed ſuddenly to break off, as though haſtened away by ſome unexpected ſummons.

The Count's aſpect changed at every note—his lips trembled, and cold ſweat hung ſhivering over his whole frame.

"Be not thus agitated, my Lord (exclaimed D'Arcos, ſenſibly pierced with the harraſſed ſituation of his kinſman)—perhaps it is only ſome love-ſick ſhepherd, who, in theſe plaintive ſtrains, records in celeſtial melody, the cruelties of ſome faithleſs ſhepherdeſs."

"It may be ſo, Sir Chevalier, but I think—no matter—theſe ſtrains are not unfamiliar to my—Indeed—I am wandering—Let us aſcend—I am anxious to put

this Caſtle into your immediate poſſeſſion. I am anxious alſo to leave it for the preſent—Time may, and, no doubt, will, unravel all theſe ſtrange myſteries—In the mean while, my country and its wrongs quickly call for my aſſiſtance.—At my return, all, perhaps, will be elucidated—I will lead the way—follow me—noble—generous—virtuous Chevalier."

To conclude, therefore, the eventful myſteries of the day—Rinaldo's Caſtle was taken poſſeſſion of by D'Arcos, in preſence of both their houſeholds, and early the next morning, Rodolph ſet out for Naples, making every prudent enquiry, as before, on his way, relative to Bernardine and Goddard, but in vain, alſo, as before.

When the Count returned to his palace, he received Lady Iſabella with great marks of affection; when ſhe queſtioned him, however, about the particulars of his journey, he briefly related thoſe circumſtances which did not ſo directly concern himſelf.——In three weeks after, Rodolph completed his full regiment of cavalry, and, by the end of the month, joined the viceroy, at the head of ſixty thouſand choſen men at arms.

CHAP-

CHAPTER XVII.

——————— I talk of dreams
Which are the children of an idle brain,
Begot of nothing but vain phantaſy,
Which is as thin of ſubſtance as the air,
And more inconſtant than the wind; who woos
Even now the frozen boſom of the North,
And being anger'd puffs away from thence,
Turning his face to the dew-dropping South.—SHAKS.

AFTER a little better than four years abſence, Rodolph returned from the Ottoman wars, with only fifteen followers, however, out of his whole retinue.

The Count had not only acquired great glory and reputation, in this four years' war, but alſo conſiderable wealth. He had been fortunate enough, thrice to ſurprize a party of the Turks, and to take from them immenſe booties—Theſe ſkirmiſhes, however, coſt him dear, for in the attacks he loſt the moſt part of his brave troops.

Thus crowned with laurels and with riches, Rodolph returned ſatisfied and elated home. The exploits he had done for his country, and the ſervices he had rendered the Chriſtian cauſe, by his zeal and valour, was a ſufficient atonement (as he wrongly, though ſuperſtitiouſly conceived) for the ſuppoſed ſacrilegious murder of his young kinſman. Two dreadful and eventful circumſtances, however, which had overtaken him in his warlike career, creeped continually athwart his imagina-

tion, and ſtruck him with ſuch frequent pungent horrors, as ſeemed reſolved to mar the fulfilment of his future hopes of peace and happineſs.

The Count having diſpatched a meſſenger onward to Naples, to announce his return, he was met in the hall by Lady Iſabella, and her domeſtics Carlo and Sylvia, with whom ſhe had been ſecluded from the world, ſince her Lord's departure. Rodolph when he firſt approached them, was grieved and ſurprized.—Both the Counteſs and her two graceful young attendants, were clad in deep mourning; their countenances correſponded with the gloomineſs of their habits. That of Iſabella, which till of late years had never loſt its health and animation, was now changed to paleneſs and dejection; whilſt, on the other hand, thoſe of Carlo and his fair companion, that had till lately alſo ſhone with youth and gaiety, were now altered into all the concern and thoughtfulneſs that accompany the furrowed cheek of good old age.

The Counteſs having left her page and Sylvia to diffuſe every refreſhment and accommodation among her Lord's retinue, ſhe led him on by the fond hand of conjugal affection to his own apartment, where ſhe had conſtantly reſided during his abſence—Rodolph returned not a word—and even dared to look—ſo flaſhing is the pure flame of innocence to the contraſted eye

of guilt—Still—a mournful and paternal ſolitude engroſſed his agitated mind.—His daughter, Santa-Maria, came fearfully, frightfully acroſs his tortured ſuſpended imagination; this thought, this bitter thought wrung him to his heart's core.

Carlo and Sylvia, in the mean time, provided their Lord's retinue with an acceptable abundance of viands, and ſeveral ſtoups of wine. Having ſet thoſe already arrived down to the firſt table, the page was preparing another, when his uncle, Droſi (who had been one of the brave and fortunate ſurvivors of this ſanguinary bout) obſerving his attention and alacrity, called out, and aſked him, what he was preparing next? "There will be a ſufficiency, my boy, (ſaid the veteran) for us, where we are."—

"What, uncle (returned Carlo) are not your brother-ſoldiers on their way hither? Muſt I not therefore provide for thoſe brave fellows alſo?"

"Alas! boy (replied the other) all that is left of us are now here." Droſi, on this, perceiving ſurpriſe and horror making their way into the countenance of his nephew, requeſted him to allay his curioſity and ſorrow, till they had refreſhed themſelves from their fatigue and hunger, with the excellent veniſon and choice lachryma-chriſti, that he had ſpread before them.—"Do not let us embitter the preſent moments (ſaid the hearty Neapolitan) by reflecting

on the misfortunes and dangers of thoſe that are paſſed."

The obedient page ſaid no more. He retired to a remote corner of the hall. The melancholy idea of ſo many brave fellows being ſwept away from his Lord's retinue gave him anguiſh unutterable.—My forebodings (thought he to himſelf) told me as much. My prophetic dreams have now come too fatally true. The bloody ſword that has ſo often appeared unſheathed to me in the ſilent hour of ſleep, will now, I hope, find repoſe in its peaceful ſcabbard.

Carlo had not only ever been the favoured page of the Counteſs and her baniſhed daughter, but was loved indiſcriminately by the whole houſehold, for his good nature, humour, and affability. *His* attention, however, was peculiarly attached to Sylvia, between whom a mutual friendſhip, now mellowed into love, had ſubſiſted for years, in both their boſoms. His Lord, indeed, had never diſtinguiſhed him by any particular marks of kindneſs, for the rough nature of the ſoldier overlooked the ſlender abilities of the page. Carlo, nevertheleſs, was of a brave diſpoſition, and honeſt withal, as an *Holſteiner*; handſome in perſon, and poſſeſſed of a manner and addreſs that diſtinguiſhed him from the ordinary file of pages. Notwithſtanding, however, theſe ſhining good qualities, his mind was ſtrongly tinctured with the ſuperſtition of the times. His

ſoul was ſacred when any uncommon event took place, and his intellectual faculties were always obſcured with the idea of beings once departed from this world, capable of optionally returning to it again.

Theſe failings, which were the characteriſtics, nevertheleſs, of thoſe ignorant times, had their ſeeds from the principles inſtilled into his mind when very young by his mother, who had attained ſuch a name all through the ſouth of Italy, by the gift of foretelling, that ſhe at laſt became a reputed witch, and was obliged to fly from her cottage, when Carlo was only fourteen years of age. On her flight, his uncle, Droſi, got him into the ſervice of Lord Rodolph, where, under his inſtructions, he became by degrees to loſe ſight of theſe unnatural fancies. This diſpoſition being thus corrected, and being naturally gay and full of good humour, he was ſoon remarked by the Counteſs and Santa-Maria, who took great pains to improve his mind, and regulate his miſguided underſtanding. When thoſe ſudden calamities had ſprung upon the houſe of Rodolph, and in their malice had ſwept away the loveliеſt and moſt amiable of all its proud branches, his earlier notions began to revive. His ſuperſtition increaſed as freſh misfortunes occurred, and he began to revive thoſe deſperate ideas of fore-

knowledge, and the whole train of fatalities that miſlead, corrupt, and degenerate the human mind.

Carlo was particularly impreſſed with the fatality of dreams,

The fickle penſioners of Morpheus' train.—MILTON.

The gloom that had prevailed in the palace ſince the pregnancy of his baniſhed miſtreſs; the dejection of his lady, and the ill ſucceſs that had attended him in the embaſſies ſhe had employed him in, to gain ſome knowledge of her daughter, in which he had conſulted every human creature who had the leaſt appearance of being a witch or a magician, that came in his way, gave his imagination the moſt melancholy turn. Thoughts, therefore, that are ſtrongly inculcated on our mind when awake, though bearing the moſt fancied complexion in a greater or leſs degree, appear as lively realities in our nightly dreams. The idea or perſon who are deareſt to us, or ever have been ſo, often accompany or reviſit us in the wild deluſions of romantic ſleep. Some bordering on the exceſs of wildneſs, and ſome keeping within the ordinary limits of domeſtic occurrences.

Such was the influence of the more horrible deſcription on the mind of Carlo, and which on reflection of ſome paſt diſaſtrous viſions made him utter the above apparently accompliſhed prophecy.

CHAPTER XVIII.

——————— Some ſtrange commotion
Is in his brain; he bites his lip and ſtarts,
Stops on a ſudden, looks on the ground,
Then lays his finger on his temple; ſtraight
Springs out into faſt gait, then ſtops again,
Strikes his breaſt hard; ——— ———
——— ——— ——— It may well be,
There's a mutiny in's mind. —SHAKSPEARE.

WHEN the Count and Counteſs were ſeated, the former, after a long pauſe, and with an agitated voice, aſked his Lady, for what unhappy cauſe ſhe appeared before him in thoſe diſmal weeds?——"Do not—Oh! do not keep me in ſuſpenſe——Say—is our daughter dead?—Oh! ſpeak it——Are Santa-Maria's woes and ſhame buried at laſt in the ſilent duſt?"—

"I fear, my Lord (replied Iſabella) that you have foreboded but too true—for—when you had departed for the wars, I cauſed the moſt diligent ſearch to be made after her deſtiny and abode. From the ſetting in of ſpring, to the fall of autumn, Carlo yearly travelled far and near, to ſeek our daughter—but in vain. He left no ſecret or religious place without apt deſcription and diligent enquiry. Her diſguiſe, when ſhe departed hence——."

"What diſguiſe?" eagerly exclaimed the Count.

"The diſguiſe, my Lord, of a pilgrim,

which *I* provided her with, on the morning of her flight from hence."

" It is even as I then ſurmiſed.—For what cauſe, Iſabella, did you thus connive to increaſe the diſhonour of our houſe? for Santa-Maria's ſudden departure ſerved more fully to confirm her guilt and ſhame."

" This ſame cauſe aroſe, dear my Lord, from the affection and ſolicitude of a mother—-irreſiſtible temptation!—I aſſiſted Santa-Maria in her eſcape, to ſave her from the fearful and impending wrath of an irritated and much inflamed father."

" Indeed!—How, my Lady, did you firſt reduce theſe ſignals of my juſt rage, to a certainty of ſucceeding puniſhment?"

" Oh! pardon me, Rodolph (replied Iſabella, in accents of fear, anguiſh, and deſpair) forgive a weak woman's curioſity —but—Oh! do not appear thus alarmed and agitated. But———I bent my ſteps towards your cloſet, when you was in cloſe conference with Bernardine and Goddard——and there I heard ——."

" What! (furiouſly exclaimed the Count, ſtarting from his ſeat) by holy St. Mark, anſwer me quick, or——."

" Thoſe fellows (coolly replied Iſabella) making the moſt ſacrilegious appeals to Heaven and the Saints above—to——."

" Diſtraction!—haſte—to what?" ſtrik-

ing his forehead, and ſpringing towards the Counteſs.

" To ſacrifice our beauteous Santa-Maria, to your vengeance and honour."

At this laſt unexpected anſwer, Rodolph immediately recovered himſelf—the mighty conflict in his breaſt, was altogether as ſuddenly appeaſed as it had been raiſed—He divined other more fatal diſcoveries—he now ſaw his error, and, to wipe away the ſuſpicions that his haſty temper might excite, he reſumed his ſeat, and, with unuſual gentleneſs, ſoftly rebuked his Lady's curioſity and want of confidence, in effecting Santa-Maria's eſcape, without his knowledge.

Iſabella, on this, equally becalmed and reſtored, went to her cloſet, and, taking out a paquet, delivered it unopened to the Count—" There, my Lord (obſerved ſhe, with an air of ſatisfaction) though my curioſity might lead me beyond my duty, when a daughter's happineſs and life were at ſtake, ſtill I have not preſumed to ſearch into your private concerns. That paquet was ſent ſix months after your departure to the wars; it comes from the Chevalier D'Arcos, and contains, I ſuſpect, matters of the moſt ſerious import."

Rodolph anxiouſly broke open the paquet, and read to himſelf as thus:

" *To the Noble* COUNT RODOLPH.

" I have been compelled, through the fears and ſuperſtition of my niece, and my domeſtics, to abandon your caſtle, after a ſhort, though painful reſidence of four months. The cauſes were briefly thus —An almoſt perpetual, gloomy, and oftentimes horrible noiſes, craſhes, and groans, have been diſtinctly heard from all parts of the Caſtle, and, notwithſtanding all my reſearches to diſcover the motives, and my endeavours, likewiſe, to calm and remove the continual apprehenſions of my family and retinue, my efforts have altogether been in vain—I have, therefore, once more, retired to my old manſion, there to enjoy thoſe ſecure and domeſtic comforts, which now muſt be the ſuppports of my declining years.

" Bellito. " D'ARCOS."

The Count had ſcarce finiſhed reading the paquet, when Iſabella gave a ſudden and violent ſhriek—Rodolph, alarmed—with unuſual fear and anxiety, enquired the cauſe. " That ring, my Lord—(faintly exclaimed the Counteſs, pointing to his finger)—that ring—Oh! whence, and how came you by that ring?"—

Rodolph, though greatly aſtoniſhed, laconically obſerved as thus:—

" You know, my Lady-wife, I hate your long tales and babbling diſcourſes; but, if I muſt ſatisfy your curioſity, know

then, that I partly owe this ring to the implacable rancour of my old friend, Contarini—For, wandering on a hot ſummer's day (continued Rodolph) a few miles from the camp, I was beſet by three men, one of whom I ſoon knew to be my bloody kinſman; for, on the firſt attack, I cleft his helmet in twain. Unable, however, long to ſtand againſt numbers, I fell, overpowered and covered with wounds. When returning ſenſe came to my ſuccour, I found myſelf couched in my own tent, ſurrounded by Droſi and ſome others of my retinue. When the former diſcovered that I was capable of liſtening to reaſon, he informed me—that he and ſome more of my choiceſt domeſtics being alarmed at my long and uncommon abſence, went out in ſearch of me, and after ſome time, and with much difficulty, found me ſtretched on a bank in a pleaſant meadow, with an old ſhepherd ſitting by my ſide. Upon his queſtioning the aged ruſtic, it appeared, that my wounds had been carefully healed, and bound up by a poor pilgrim (poor, it ſeems, however, in garb alone) who happened to paſs by ſoon after I fell. By their joint endeavours, he added, that I was conveyed to the bank where Droſi had found me; and that after this ſecond Samaritan had pronounced me out of danger, he had given him a piece of gold to watch over me till I could be conveyed to

the camp. By St. Peter (obſerved the Count abruptly here) this ſame tale-telling outdoes my breathing!"

"Then to the ring, my good Lord (exclaimed Iſabella impatiently) quick—the ring I beſeech you—ſay aught of the ring."

"This ring diſturbs you marvellouſly, my Lady-wife—what myſtery hangs on this ſame ring?—*I* will be anſwered firſt, or not reply at all."

"Indeed, then know, my Lord, that that ſame ring, was once the pledge of a parent's love. That it was bequeathed by my departed Sire, on his dying couch, to me, with this pious injunction, never to beſtow it upon an object who did not deſerve the wearing of it. I obeyed this laſt requeſt, and reſigned it to an object that his happy ſpirit could not but approve of. Yes, for it was on the noble Lord Rinaldo that I beſtowed it, juſt on the eve of his marriage with your baniſhed child, Santa Maria." At this laſt expreſſion, the Counteſs relieved the anxiety of her feelings by a violent flood of tears.

Rodolph, on the other hand, was ſtruck with far different ſenſations. His preſent aſtoniſhment at firſt outweighed all that he had experienced before on ſimilar wonderful occaſions. He took the hold, however, of Iſabella's grief, to reflect for a few moments. He thereon diſcovered that he had been led into unſoldierlike bab-

bling. The ring certainly and unequivocally denoted ſome freſh myſtery—that he could become poſſeſſed of it from Rinaldo, was almoſt impoſſible. Rings might paſs, like other baubles, from hand to hand, from perſon to perſon. If the Prince ſtill exiſted, it was hardly to be ſuppoſed (notwithſtanding the pacific tendency of his nature) that he would prefer the wandering life of an alms-aſking vagrant pilgrim, to that of being the lordly holder of Rinaldo Caſtle. It could not be —ſuch idle fancies, therefore (bethought Rodolph) were only fit to raiſe the fears, and fix the ſuſpicions of a romantic woman, and not thoſe of an old weather-beaten ſoldier.

The Count was ever a man of brief diſcourſe. When he related the circumſtance of his being attacked by Contarini, he clothed it in as few words as poſſible; in fact, he thought it of ſo little conſequence to any one but himſelf, that he never intended mentioning it all, particularly to the Lady Iſabella. The ſubject probably was to reſt with himſelf, and himſelf only. He had already planned his deſigns of revenge, and as he had no opportunity of accompliſhing them with ſafety and ſecrecy abroad, he had delayed the matter till he could effect his deſigns at home. Another ſubject of female enquiry was alſo at hand —the Chevalier's paquet. Reſolved, however, that this matter, at leaſt, ſhould pro-

ceed no farther, he ſuddenly thruſt it into a fire, and on the Counteſs expreſſing the moſt ardent curioſity to be acquainted with the contents—Rodolph briefly replied —" That they moſtly tallied with the myſteries of her extraordinary ring, and that, both alike, were ſubjects fit only for the handling of beardleſs youths, and credulous young girls."

The Lady Iſabella finding all entreaty and remonſtrance in vain, patiently ſubmitted to her Lord's will, and retired, oppreſſed with all the anxiety and ſurmiſe that a mind like her's was ſo capable of feeling.

CHAPTER XIX.

An honeſt tale ſpeeds beſt, being plainly told.

SHAKSPEARE.

EARLY in the morning, after Rodolph had gone to the Viceroy's palace, the Counteſs ſent for Carlo, and making him ſtand near her chair, queſtioned him concerning his good uncle, Droſi. The page on this aſſumed a moſt woeful countenance, and ſhaking his head, dolefully exclaimed —" Strange things, my Lady, have happened ſince his departure from this ſpot."

Iſabella's curioſity being raiſed to its utmoſt pitch, at theſe ill-boding ſhakes of the head, and ambiguous expreſſions, requeſted Carlo to inform her of all thoſe ſtrange things that he ſaid had happened.

The page, on this requeſt, which he was proud to receive, and ſtill prouder to obey, commenced a long exordium, with as long a ſtring of the dreams and prophecies, that he had made upon each diſmal occurrence, that had afterwards but too truly and too fatally (he ſaid) taken place. —Such as chargers throwing their riders —armies attacking armies with red-hot ſwords and flaming ſhields. Chiefs hurling burning mountains at each other's heads.—Soldiers throwing women and children half a mile up into the air, and then catching them upon their ſpears as they deſcended.

Carlo, after having related his full of theſe horrible dreams, and after recapitulating the numberleſs battles that his uncle had been engaged in, and the loſſes they had ſuſtained, he at length reached the circumſtance of the Count's being attacked by that young venomous cur (as he ſaid) Philip Contarini. This he related to the ſame effect as his Lord had done before, but in a ſtyle infinitely more copious and ſublime.

Iſabella, fatigued at laſt with his prolixity, interrupted him, by aſking if he had been told any thing about the ring? "Yes (returned Carlo) my uncle mentioned a great deal about a ring; but my Lord, I ſuppoſe, has related all before."—"He has, (replied the Counteſs, with great anxiety) but I am ever fond, Carlo, of liſten-

ing to your diſcourſe, and, therefore, can cheerfully endure it repeated once more." The page, flattered by this diſtinction, thus proceeded:

" The Count, my Lady, took no notice of the ring, till Droſi was buckling on his armour, when faſtening the gauntlets on his hand, he obſerved this ring. My Lord was greatly ſurprized, but recollecting awhile how it could come there, he obſerved to my uncle, that the good pilgrim, no doubt, who paid the peaſant to watch over my wounds, placed this rich valuable on my finger, to enſure my farther ſafety and protection." Here Iſabella, raiſing her hands and eyes to Heaven, ſilently offered up a fervent ejaculation to the great ruler thereof, to bleſs and preſerve the charitable donor. " The ſtrange incident, however, that afterwards followed (continued Carlo) ſtruck me far more forcibly; for when the Count halted at an inn in Tuſcany, on his journey homewards, Droſi ſaw my Lady Santa-Maria!!!"

" Santa-Maria, did you ſay (exclaimed the thunderſtruck Counteſs) Oh! God—ſay it once more—was it my child—my Santa-Maria? — Repeat the glad ſounds again, I conjure you, Carlo.—Moſt merciful Creator!—My Santa-Maria, my long loſt daughter, then is found."

" Pardon me, kindeſt Lady, (anſwered the page, interrupting his joy-diſtracted Lady) for having thus raiſed your expec-

tations to a height I did not intend. Be patient, hear me out.—Oh! if you weep and look thus, I cannot proceed.—It was not Santa-Maria in perſon, but her *picture* he ſaw, hung up againſt a wall; and ſo great was the reſemblance, that Droſi thought he ſaw his young lady in reality. He immediately pointed the picture out to my Lord.—The Count Rodolph ſtarted from the object—appeared amazed beyond conception; and then after a pauſe of ſome moments, concealed his agitated countenance under the ſkirts of his mantle. After my Lord had recovered from this fever of aſtoniſhment, he ſummoned the hoſt to his preſence, and anxiouſly queſtioned him how he came by that picture?—The man as briefly replied, that it was painted by a young pilgrim, who had been overtaken by ſickneſs in his houſe, about three years or nearly that ago. That when he had recovered from the firſt ſhock, he had amuſed himſelf (when not engaged in relieving poor, worn-out, exhauſted, indigent travellers) with drawing that picture, and, by St. Marco, a moſt beautiful divine picture it is;—more like an angel, than a mortal. To make ſhort, however, of the ſtory (concluded the hoſt) when this chriſtian pilgrim departed hence, he gave me five pieces of gold, and promiſed me as many more, if I would preſerve it till he returned. The Count on this appeared

ſatisfied, though my uncle informs me, that this diſcovery rendered him melancholy, thoughtful, and unſociable, the remainder of his journey."

Carlo had ſcarcely concluded his narrative, when Iſabella heard the folding gates open, on this ſhe immediately diſmiſſed him from her preſence, with injunctions of ſecrecy. The page promiſed acquieſcence, and then as ſoon haſtened to Sylvia, to lay the whole buſineſs before her; and afterwards to ſubmit a few reflections he had made on the ſubject, for her opinion.

When the Count entered the apartment, he paid no attention whatever to the emotions of his wife, which were ſtrongly viſible, both in her countenance and manner, but proceeded without any ceremony to inform her, that he ſhould ſet off for his caſtle in the ſouth, on the day after the morrow; and therefore requeſted her to be prepared for the journey, together with all the valuable moveables ſhe moſt eſteemed, and conceived moſt neceſſary for their future ſplendour and accommodation. Intending (as Rodolph ſaid) to ſpend *the remainder of his days at the Caſtle.*

CHAPTER XX.

Faſt by the road her ever open door
Oblig'd the wealthy and reliev'd the poor.—POPE.

ON the appointed day, Rodolph and Iſabella, with their retinue and men at arms,

ſet out from Naples, leaving only three domeſtics in the palace, and proceeded on their journey to the moſt ſouthern part of Italy.

The Count and all his followers were mounted on horſeback. Part of whom rode forward, whilſt the reſt (among whom were Droſi and Carlo) attended the Calaſh in which were the Counteſs and Sylvia.

The advanced party had received orders to halt about twilight at the moſt convenient place of rendezvous they could find, and prepare therein every thing ſuitable for the reception of the Count and Counteſs. Droſi and Carlo endeavoured to perſuade their Lord to ſtop for that night at Salerno, where, they ſaid, moſt excellent accommodations were to be found. As the van of his retinue, however, had paſſed through that place ſome time before, Rodolph reſiſted their applications, much to the diſſatisfaction of Droſi, who affirmed that there was ſome of the beſt lachrymachriſti in Salerno as ever was drunk—

Twilight, however, approached before any tidings could be heard or ſeen of the advanced party, and it was completely dark before one of the horſemen returned to meet the calaſh. On approaching the Count, he informed him, that he and his party had made towards an inn, which they had formerly known to be a place of excellent cheer, and a conſtant rendezvous

for travellers paſſing to and fro from Naples to Meſſina. On their preſent arrival thither, however, not a ſoul was to be ſeen, nor bed, chair, or any other convenience to be found, though, on ſearching the place, they had fortunately found their way to the cellars, which, as happily, ſeemed well ſtored with wine. Gabot, in the mean time, my Lord, was ſtill more ſucceſsfully employed; for at a ſmall diſtance from the inn, he had diſcovered a neat convenient cottage. The tenants are only an old woman and her ſon, who are now buſily preparing themſelves to receive your Lordſhip, and my Lady the Counteſs.

This latter information was highly acceptable to all parties, particularly to Carlo and Sylvia. The former having long ago inſtilled his ſuperſtitious doctrines into the mind of his fair ſweetheart.—Both of them trembled every limb, when they firſt heard the horſeman's barren and diſconſolate relation of the deſerted inn.

The latter fellow having conducted the calaſh to the cottage, the Counteſs and Sylvia alighted. Rodolph, in the mean time, diſtinguiſhing the bleating of ſheep at ſome little diſtance, aſked the ruſtic to whom they belonged? "To us, my Lord, (replied Thommaſo) and an you want a fine fat wether for your noble retinue, I will get them one anon. But now I bethink myſelf of it, we have got one in our yard, which was killed laſt Thurſday, that will

anſwer better both in the cooking and the eating." The Count accepted this hoſpitable offer of the honeſt ruſtic, on condition, however, of paying for the ſame; and on its being produced, it was delivered over to Droſi and the horſeman, who immediately ſet off with it to their companions, at the deſerted inn. This unexpected acquiſition, together with the wine, amply atoned for the badneſs of their lodgings. Fuel was eaſily and inſtantly provided—down, therefore, went the ſheep to roaſt, and in a few hours afterwards they commenced their ſubſtantial repaſt, not forgetting to pay due honours to the purpureal regalia of the cellar. Hunger was the grand ſauce they had to their mutton, and thirſt afforded an additional zeſt to the wine. Happy in their preſent enjoyments they all ſet to like princes—but alas!—misfortunes and diſappointments will often obtrude themſelves in a cellar as well as a palace.—Thus unluckily it fell out with Droſi and his comrades—but more of this anon—for it would be cruel, as yet, to diſturb theſe honeſt fellows at the very onſet of their hilarity.

The Count and Counteſs being ſeated, Carlo and Sylvia aſſiſted the peaſants in preparing their ſupper, which conſiſted of a nice antipaſto—two or three ſmall diſhes of different ragoos—an excellent mineſtra—with ſome boiled ſnails, and a

diſh of fried frogs. Iſabella was greatly ſurpriſed at the unexpected good accommodation they had met with, and the neatneſs of every thing around them—particularly at the ſight of ſilver ſpoons and platters, which were prepared for their hoſpitable meal—an unuſual luxury in thoſe oppreſſive days among people ſo apparently humble. Her ſurpriſe excited her curioſity—She enquired, therefore, of the old woman, to what good fortune ſhe ſtood indebted for her preſent comforts and happineſs?—

" Ah! my Lady (replied the aged Bianca) we owe all that you ſee here to a charitable and benevolent ſtranger."

She was going to proceed, when Rodolph foreſeeing a long ſtory on the point of taking place, interrupted her, by aſking, " the cauſe of that inn, which ſtood hard by, being ſo ſuddenly and unaccountably deſerted?"

" About four years ago, my Lord, or ſomewhat approaching thereunto (anſwered Bianca) our hoſt, Hurtado, who was a right good, valiant, and religious ſoul withal, took it into his honeſt heart to join his countrymen in the late Turkiſh war. On the eve of his departure, he ſold off all his valuables and plate (for many an Italian Prince would ſojourn at good Hurtado's houſe) to purchaſe himſelf and a few of his neareſt kinſmen, the neceſſary equipments for their diſtant journey. For

Hurtado, my Lord, was a man of mettle, and would go only as a volunteer; ſuch as you now ſee before you, was once his property, and purchaſed of him by a ſtranger, who lodged under my humble roof—Alack! is me, for, I ſhall never forget the day, when—it was, I think, four years and odd, ſome next Shrove-tide eve—aye—aye—it was even ſo, when ——" The ſupper being at this critical moment ſerved upon the table by Carlo and the ruſtic, poor Bianca was once more interrupted in the thread of her ſecond ſtory. The Count and Counteſs, however, were amply recompenſed for the old woman's procraſtinated hiſtory by the plaintive notes of a ſweet-chirping nightingale, who, it ſeems, had long courted and claimed a welcome ſhelter in ſome ſhady receſs of this hoſpitable little cottage,

Where woodbines cluſter round the door,
Where ſhells and moſs o'erlay the floor,
And on whoſe top an hawthorn blows,
Amid whoſe thickly woven boughs
Some nightingale ſtill builds her neſt.

J. Warton.

CHAPTER XXI.

Admirable! How this grace
Speaks his own ſtanding! What a mental power
This eye ſhoots forth! How big imagination
Moves in his lip! To the dumbneſs of the geſture
One might interpret.
I'll ſay of it,
It tutors nature: artificial ſtrife
Lives in theſe touches, livelier than life.

——— That ſhe is living
Were it but told you, ſhould be hooted at
Like an *old tale*, but it appears ſhe lives
Though ſhe ſpeaks not—mark a little while. SHAKS.

THE Count and Counteſs now began their meal with pleaſure and appetite.—Rodolph ſhortly called to the page for ſome wine, for Thommaſo had alſo diſcovered the ſecret of the cellar, and had laid in a little ſtock therefore for Bianca and himſelf—Carlo's attention, however, was too much engroſſed to attend to the ſummons. The Count repeated the order—Carlo walked to and fro without heeding this ſecond call. Rodolph turned angrily round to learn the cauſe of his unaccuſtomed inattention. The page on this retreated ſome paces from the wall, and with great emotion exclaimed—"Yes—yes—it is—it is—it muſt—it muſt be him!"—The Count and Counteſs, both ſurpriſed at this wild and ſudden exclamation, demanded of Carlo, what he meant?—The page immediately pointed to the wall, and diſcovered to their view the—Picture of Prince Rinaldo ——

I ſhall not—I cannot attempt to deſcribe the emotions of either at this unexpected adventure. The pencil, and not the pen, would here ſucceed the beſt—The Tuſcan portrait now ſtarted with redoubled vigour on their aſtoniſhed, perturbed imaginations: actuated by the ſame feelings, they aroſe from their ſeats, and viewed the reſemblance with mutual ſurpriſe——The ancient hoſteſs, ſtruck with the rapidity of their alarms, beſeeched them to conclude their meal, and ſhe would afterwards reveal the cauſe of their preſent—ſudden aſtoniſhment.

"Ah! me (continued Bianca with a long ſigh) I always dreamed there was ſome myſtery hanging on that picture, and the good angel that drew it. It has always been my prayer both night and day, ſitting and riſing, to live till I found it out—my trembling heart ſmote me to the quick, when the horſemen announced that Lord Rodolph and his Lady Iſabella wiſhed to be my gueſts this night, for often have I heard the fair creature who formed that picture, pronounce their names with ſorrow, tears, and anguiſh.—Ah! lack-a-day!—I ſhould have told you all before (obſerved Bianca, wiping the ſcalding tear from off her withered cheek) if my Lord had not interrupted me about the ſtory of honeſt Hurtado."—

"Then begin it now," exclaimed Rodolph with a tone of impatience and command.

" Aye, prithee do; my good old hoſteſs," ſaid the Counteſs in a different accent—an accent replete with mildneſs and anxiety.

" About four years ago, my worthy Lady (continued Bianca) a young pilgrim was diſcovered hard by, by my deceaſed huſband, under a ſpreading oak, in all the agonies of ſickneſs and deſpair.—He immediately raiſed her—(I ſay *her*, for under that diſguiſe was the loveliеſt of all women) and conveyed his drooping burthen to our humble cottage; for humble indeed it truly was, till heaven ſent the fair ſtranger here, for our comfort and preſent happineſs. The extreme pangs ſhe laboured under, could not long eſcape my penetration. I ſoon diſcovered that ſhe was a woman, and in a ſtate of *pregnancy*. For ſome time ſhe perſiſted that my ſuppoſitions were wrong. Finding her labours, however, hourly increaſe, ſhe called me to her bed-ſide, and graſping my hand cloſely between her's—Yes—graſping my hand cloſely between her's (ſaid Bianca, repeating her words, and rendering her hiſtory ſtill more diſtreſſing and affecting by a tearful effuſion to paſt remembrances) the dear young Lady, with great anguiſh, exclaimed, " Alas! my poor old creature (ſuch were her very words) I am, what you have ſuggeſted me to be—a woman—and a forlorn miſerable woman withal—I

fear—I am alſo, what you have ſuppoſed me to be—*pregnant*—Oh! I feel, indeed, the pangs of child-birth grow heavy on me—but as heaven—as God is to be my great and awful judge, I am innocent as the babe that is in my womb—And, how that innocent came there, the Almighty only knows for me—On this, my dear young child (for ſuch I muſt ever call her) pauſed for ſome time, and afterwards appeared much collected—When *Santa-Maria* recovered herſelf ſo far—yes, truly, my Lord (ſeeing Rodolph's countenance change) for that was her name—ſhe requeſted me to ſearch on the right ſide of her pilgrim's habit, and there I ſhould find plenty of gold to ſend for ſome medical aſſiſtance, and likewiſe ſufficient to recompenſe me for all my kindneſs and hoſpitality. I heeded not what related to myſelf, but loſt no time in diſpatching my ſon, Thommaſo—Yes, my dutiful boy there, whom you now ſee liſtening before you." —— Here a pauſe of ſome moments enſued; for Thommaſo, affected by the remembrance of paſt events, ſo artleſsly revived by his mother, turned on one ſide, to conceal the tender emotions of his heart, which had ſprung into his eyes; whilſt his honeſt, unaffected ſympathy, produced a ſimilar effect on the aged hiſtorian. Alas! alas! if they, poor ſtrangers—(ſtrangers, as I may ſay, in compariſon to moſt then preſent) if they could thus feel for the hapleſs fugi-

tive, what muſt the emotions of a tender mother have been? Carlo and Sylvia experienced almoſt equal ſorrow and regret. As for the Count, he was enwrapt in ſilence, wonder, and attention.

Bianca continued her tale. "Thommaſo, in a few hours afterwards returned with a ſurgeon from Evoli, and early in the morning Santa-Maria was delivered of—

"*A dead-born child.*

"Fatigue and anxiety of mind had brought on an early conception; for, as the ſurgeon told me, his patient had only been ſeven months gone."

On this laſt information, Rodolph broke ſilnce, and exclaimed—"Fortune, then, has ſo far at leaſt been kind to the honour of our houſe!"

Iſabella, on the contrary, ſilently offered up her prayer—"That the innocence and happineſs of the mother, might prove one day equal to thoſe of her departed infant."

"To conclude my ſtory (ſaid Bianca) Santa-Maria ſoon after recovered her health, and alſo her ſpirits in ſome degree. Her time was then always employed in forming that portrait on the wall. In theſe hours of recreation, ſhe would often ſigh and weep—Often have I heard her ſigh forth the name of Rinaldo—often have I ſeen her weep, when ſhe mentioned the names of Rodolph and Iſabella—Iſabella, (as ſhe was wont to ſay) that very beſt of mothers and of women. To make a finiſh,

however, of my doleful tale, for I am very old and weak, (ſaid Bianca) and cannot relate every particular circumſtance that took place at that time, my young Lady hearing that Hurtado (who had aſſiſted us on this trying occaſion with all the neceſſaries his houſe afforded) was determined to ſet out for the wars, and wanted money for the undertaking, than ſhe made my huſband go and purchaſe thoſe articles of luxury, (and that at Hurtado's own valuation) which you now ſee before you. Immediately after that, ſhe got Thommaſo to get her a neat ſhepherd's dreſs, and when equipped therein, Santa-Maria, after giving me ten pieces of gold, took me into her chamber; then drawing a rich croſs from her boſom, ſhe fell on her knees, and in the preſence of God and myſelf, moſt fervently vowed never to divulge the ſecret of her ſex, till time or chance had developed *the myſtery of her pregnancy*. The following morning ſhe departed early from our cottage, and her departure was ſoon followed by the death of my poor huſband, who took her abſence ſo ſore at heart, that he never after held up his head. *My* years happily withſtood theſe cruel ſhocks—I ſay happily, my good Lord and Lady, as I have ſurvived to tell this eventful tale. I ſhall now paſs as happily to my grave, and in a far happier world, ſtill continue to offer my morning prayer to the

merciful God of our exiſtence, to ſhower his bleſſings and his comfort on my Lady Santa-Maria—if ſo, by chance, I meet her not, where with faith, hope, and repentance, I muſt ſhortly expect to go."

For oh!
If ſhe had partaken of my fleſh, and coſt me the deareſt groans of a mother, I could not have owed her a more rooted love. SHAKS.

On this, Carlo put his hand to his heart, and with a fervent wiſh, rejoined—Amen—amen.

CHAPTER XXII.

Like an *old tale* ſtill which ſhall have
Matters to rehearſe, tho' credit be aſleep, and not
An ear open. SHAKS.

THE Count and Counteſs had ſcarce time to form their obſervations on the affecting ſtory related by Bianca, when a violent rapping aſſaulted the cottage door. Thommaſo immediately attended this unexpected ſummons, and demanded "Who was without?"—"It's me—hic—Thom—ma—hic—it's me."—Then ſtraight went the intruder's head full up againſt the door. Rodolph and Iſabella immediately roſe, and Carlo as inſtantly recollecting the voice without anxiouſly exclaimed—"It is my uncle, Droſi,"—"Y-e-s—hic—hic—up—yes—it's Droſi," was the disjointed reply. —The door thereupon was unfaſtened, and in came Droſi, ſtaggering, quite over-

come with the charms of his favourite miſtreſs—lachryma-chriſti. " How now (ſaid the Count, ſternly)—why, this intruſion?—You are drunk, ſirrah."—" Be ſi-lent, my Lord—be ſi-lent—I--I—hic—I know—I-am—But if I—have not had—hic—O Je-ſu—hicc--up—reaſon--enough—to ma--ma--make me ſo--ber—The devil—take me—that's all—ex-cuſe me—ſwearing--my--my Lord—But--I--I--know—I am---dru--dru--drunk."

" Then more ſhame for you, be it ſpoken uncle, " obſerved Carlo.

" Hold your—your prate, thou ſcurvy knave (returned Droſi, placing his hand on the hilt of his ſword) or I will car—ba—na—do—hic—you well— for though—I may be—dru——drunk—I can fig—fight as well—as the beſt—aye—dolt—as--as—well as my Lord there.—And by Jeſu--that--that--is--ſaying--a good deal."

At this laſt expreſſion, Droſi ſtaggered againſt the wall, oppoſite to the one which ſupported Rinaldo's picture. His eyes were inſtantly fixed thereon—he ſtared wildly, and for ſome moments ſtopt the incoherency of his ſpeech.—His voice, however, ſoon found re-utterance, and his ſenſes ſome recovery at the ſight of the young prince. The Count and the whole cottage, were ſurpriſed and perplexed at this ſtrange conduct, whilſt their anxieties predicted ſome freſh myſtery at hand.

Droſi, however, after as much reflection, as he could ſummons to his aſſiſtance, propped his tottering carcaſe againſt the wall, and with a recovering degree of ſobriety, exclaimed—"There he is—by St. Marco—there he is, ſure as my name is honeſt, ſober, Signior Droſi."

"Who? (moſt fiercely returned the Count) Who, ſirrah?"

"Who?—Why, my Lord, have you loſt your ſight?"

"Scoundrel, you have loſt your ſenſes—anſwer me ſtraight—quick (roared the Count, drawing his ſword, and fixing its point to Droſi's breaſt) anſwer, I ſay! and inform me what brought you hither in this intoxicated ſtate, and what ſudden cauſe thus baniſhed you ſo unexpectedly from the inn?"

Iſabella, Carlo, Sylvia, and the hoſpitable cottagers, perceiving the violent emotions of Rodolph, and the conſequent danger of Drunken Droſi, unanimouſly ruſhed between, and interfered in his preſent behalf. The old ſoldier having recovered himſelf a little, however, by this time, and touched by the application made by all around, for his protection—with great good humour, and ſome compoſure, exclaimed—"Have done, have done, my Lord is too generous to take an advantage of his ancient veteran, and faithful follower."—

Rodolph, ſoftened by this condeſcen-

ſion, and convinced of the integrity that attended the profeſſion, ordered Carlo to bring his uncle ſome water; which having drank plentifully of, he afterwards, unwittingly, ſeated himſelf in his Lady's chair.—The count, on this, beckoned Iſabella and the reſt, to ſeat themſelves as well as they conveniently could, and then, with unaccuſtomed affability beſeeched Droſi to explain the cauſe of his thus ſuddenly breaking in upon them:——Here, the honeſt fellow perceiving that Rodolph was in an armed chair, conceived himſelf to be in one alſo, and, in attempting to imitate his maſter, whoſe elbows were placed on the arms, in a ſtate of his uſual gravity, he fell ſideways on the floor, from which proſtrate ſituation he was relieved by his nephew and Thommaſo.—Being now once more re-inſtated in his chair, he, with much conſequence, thus commenced his ſtory:—

" My good Lord, and my good Lady,

" After our comrades under my immediate inſpection, had dreſſed the ſheep, which that honeſt young fellow there had provided us with, ready cut and dried, we all ſat cheerfully down to ſupper—On ſetting out, however, you muſt underſtand, my Lord, that we had not forgot the wine—of that we drank pretty freely. Together, therefore, with good eating and good drinking, after our long journey,

we all got tolerably merry. When lo my good Lord, and my good Lady, a troop of armed men—about 50, 100, or 500, I can't exactly tell which—entered the apartment where we were all carouſing—we all turned round on our heels, or rather all reeled round on our heels—I like to be fair and open, my Lord—I therefore ſay, reeled—becauſe I am apt to think that we were all drunk—I, however, being the ſobereſt of any, demanded who the ſtrangers were, and what they wanted?—Upon which a ſturdy fellow approached me, with a good-natured look, and ſaid—" that he was the hoſt of the inn, in which we had been carouſing, and hoped, withal that we ſhould pay for the good cheer we ſeemed to have met with, as he was returned from the wars, poorer than when he went."

" Good lack-a-day! (exclaimed Bianca) it muſt be our hoſt Hurtado, that you ſpeak of."—

" Right (returned Droſi) that is his name, for he told me ſo himſelf, and as I was not preſent at his chriſtening, I cannot diſpute it, my old damſel."

At this latter expreſſion, Lady Iſabella, with her uſual mildneſs and good-nature, obſerved—" Droſi, this kind old woman, you know, has been our hoſteſs; for my ſake, therefore, anſwer her leſs abruptly."—

Theſe few words from the Counteſs,

had as much effect on Droſi, as almoſt ſix hours ſound repoſe.— The ſuſceptible fellow, therefore, begged poor Bianca's pardon, and promiſed his Lady not to offend again.

" When our hoſt, therefore, my Lord, (continued Droſi, with more gravity than before) made this requeſt, I aſked him what was his demand. The captain of the party (who, I am ſure, by his armour, is one of the Viceroy's body-guard) on this, approached Hurtado, and whiſpered ſomething in his ear—upon which mine hoſt directly ſaid to me, in reply, that he ſhould not accept of leſs than ten pieces of gold.—My comrades thunderſtruck at this exorbitant demand, collected themſelves together at one end of the room, whilſt the ſtrange ſoldiers (accompanied with a loud laugh) began to regale themſelves with the remnants of our wine; not having ten pieces of gold, my Lord, or near the value of it, among us all, we ſtood fooliſh and ſilent for ſome minutes. During this painful interval of ſuſpence to us, I perceived that the captain was much diverted with our embarraſſment, and whiſpering our hoſt again: Hurtado immediately advanced towards us, and ſaid—" That for our farther delay, he muſt have five pieces more."—Our amazement encreaſing, particularly when this ear-monger (for I cannot at preſent call him by any other name) perceiving us put our

hands to the hilts of our ſwords, beckoned his men to unſheathe their ſcymitars, and protect the entrances. Diſcovering me to be the chief of our little party, he then advanced himſelf, and aſked me, under whoſe command I ſerved?—'My Lord Rodolph's,' I replied. On this he turned his heel upon me, and *eared* mine hoſt again.—Hurtado then addreſſed himſelf to me again, and farther added, 'that as we were the retinue of Count Rodolph, he muſt have *fifteen* pieces of gold, or we ſhould not ſtir from thence.'—Excuſe me, my Lord, but at this laſt requiſition, I could not refrain from laughing heartily myſelf, and a moſt happy laugh it was? for had I been boiſterous or moroſe, we ſhould, perhaps, have had treble that to pay. The Captain, on this effuſion of good-natured forbearance (as he termed it) told me, that I might go on to you, and if in caſe I brought back the fifteen pieces of gold, for his active and valiant friend Hurtado, my companions ſhould be all ſet free; and if not, that he would put every man under an arreſt, in the Viceroy's name, for having treſpaſſed upon property that we were not legally entitled to. Then diſcovering that my legs were not quite ſo ſteady as they ſhould have been, and my ſpeech a little inarticulate, I ſuppoſe, or ſo, when I liſped out your Lordſhip's name, he ordered one of his party to conduct me

ſafe to the road-ſide;—and as I departed, the military wag laughed moſt heartily.

" Anxious to learn the cauſe of their ſudden and abrupt arrival at the inn, I enquired of my companion, drunk as I then was, who, without the leaſt heſitation, informed me—that they had been diſpatched to ſeize an alarming banditti, who had infeſted theſe parts, for four years and more. ' The chief motive, however (ſaid he) of our being ſent hither, was at the inſtigation of Philip Count Contarini, who was attacked but two days ago, by theſe dangerous ruffians, between the Vale of Diana and the Appenine mountains, and there dangerouſly wounded by one of their chiefs."

Wounded or *killed*, did he ſay?"—exclaimed Rodolph, with a ſavage exultation ſparkling in his eyes.

" Wounded, my Lord."

" Said he, what brought Contarini ſo far ſouthward?"

" He afterwards ſaid, that the Count was on his way to Bellito."

Rodolph pauſed on this reply for ſome time, and then, with much perturbation, directed Droſi to proceed.

" Hurtado (continued the ſtranger) who is now one of the Viceroy's body-guard, and who was known to be well acquainted with the receſſes along this part of the country, was deputed to be our guide in this expedition. His penetration was as

rapid as it was fortunate, for he conducted us to a ſecret receſs at the foot of the Appenines, where we ſurprized the robbers carouſing. Finding themſelves thus ſuddenly ſurprized, and ſeeing it impoſſible to extricate themſelves, they fought with incredible fury.—Many fell in the conflict—ſome made their eſcapes through ſubterraneous paſſages. The two chiefs, however, were taken alive, and ſome few of their banditti. They have been ſince conducted, under a ſtrong eſcort, to the Caſtle at Salerno, and will be ſent forward in the morning to Naples.'

" I then, my Lord (continued Droſi) particularly and pointedly aſked my companion, how they came to faſten on us at the inn, ſo ſuddenly and unexpectedly."

" Hurtado (he anſwered) expreſſed a wiſh to pay a viſit to his old abode, as it was but a few paces out of their way. He alſo informed our commander (whom you may perceive is inclined to be merry and facetious) that he had left ſome choice flagons of wine behind him, when he had left it, which was a very perſuaſive inducement, indeed, with our chief, to comply with his requeſt."

" And pray, my friend (ſaid I, in return) may I be bold enough, to enquire the name of this merry hero?"

" Montano (he replied) captain in the King's body-guard."—Having by this time reached the road-ſide, my companion left

me; and I ſtaggered by myſelf, as well as I could, to the cottage door."

" Montano (exclaimed Rodolph, with rage and vexation, furiouſly depictured on his ſable brow)—Montano—no wonder, then, my retinue have been thus inſulted —myſelf ſtill more ſo.—He is the boſom friend of my enemy, Contarini.—And, hell and furies! what is ſtill worſe, I muſt ſubmit to this extortion.—Standing, as he does, a repreſentative of the Vice-roy's power, and holding you all in his poſſeſſion, under the pitiful ſubterfuge of your having encroached upon the rights and privileges of another.—My pride, my ſpirit, muſt meanly ſubmit to his domineering ſuperiority. Here then, Droſi (continued the aggravated Count) here take him his paltry tribute of fifteen pieces, and haſte to releaſe your impriſoned companions."

Droſi having ſet out for the inn, Rodolph requeſted the Counteſs to prepare herſelf to continue the journey that night, as his retinue could no longer occupy the inn, nor themſelves remain at the cottage with any degree of ſafety, from ſuch turbulent and vicious inclined neighbours.

No tidings could have been more welcome to the ears of the Counteſs, Carlo, and Sylvia, than theſe commands of Rodolph. As for poor Bianca and her ſon, they were much diſtreſſed at the cauſe of their gueſts' departure, and ſtill more en-

raged againſt thoſe who had been the occaſion of it. The former, indeed, beſtowed a hearty curſe on Hurtado, whom ſhe was determined never to call, honeſt Hurtado, any more.

Droſi returned in a ſhort time afterwards, with his ranſomed comrades. He then informed Rodolph, that he had given the fifteen pieces of gold to Captain Montano, who immediately transferred it over to Hurtado. Mine hoſt as inſtantly offered me a couple of pieces, but I politely refuſed them; obſerving with all the gravity I poſſibly could—"That the whole was little enough, for the quantity of his wine we had drank, and the excellent accommodations we had met with at his houſe." Captain Montano perceiving the conſtraint I put on my muſcles, and the forced conceit I likewiſe put on my words, burſt into a loud fit of laughter. Hurtado, on our departure, however, ſhook me heartily by the hand, and aſſured me, withal, that I ſhould henceforth be a free and welcome gueſt at his houſe. In his apparent courteſy, my Lord, I thanked him, though in my heart I inwardly curſed their ill-timed merriment and extortion.

The Count and Counteſs having each made a handſome preſent to the poor cottagers; and Sylvia, Droſi, and Carlo, having alſo contributed to increaſe their purſe, they purſued their journey, leaving Bianca and Thommaſo gazing after them, till

their tears finally clouded them from their farther view.

CHAPTER XXIII.

If ancient ſorrow be moſt reverent,
Give mine the benefit of ſigniory;
And let my griefs frown on the upper hand,
If ſorrow can admit ſociety,
Tell o'er your woes again, by viewing mine.
When ſorrows come, they come not ſingle ſpies,
But in battalions.——SHAKSPEARE.

IT would be too tedious to relate every particular little incident, that the Count and his retinue met with, on their journey to his Caſtle in the hither Calabria: the leading features of them greatly ſimilar to the former adventure; for ſeldom did they halt at any inn, or accidental houſe of accommodation, but what they ſaw the picture of Rinaldo figured or ſketched in the principal apartments. One, indeed, of a ſuperior nature was ſeen and admired by Rodolph, at Lauria, and which, for its beautiful colouring, cloſe ſimilitude, and noble effect, afterwards found its way to the Viceroy's Picture Gallery, at Naples. Though theſe exhibitions were diſagreeable to the ſight and feelings of the Count, they afforded his amiable wife the pleaſing conſolation that Santa-Maria was ſtill exiſting, and that ſhe ſhould ſee her once again, before either had journeyed on to

that "bourne from whence no traveller returns."

About eleven leagues diſtant from Bellito, the Counteſs finding herſelf much fatigued, and perceiving a neat ſmall houſe at hand, requeſted her Lord to halt there for an hour or two. Rodolph readily aſſented to this propoſal, as he knew they could find no convenient accommodations at Caſtro-Villari, a poor town about a mile onward. Perceiving, therefore, a man diſconſolately leaning over a gate, which led to the houſe, he requeſted an hour's admiſſion for himſelf and his retinue to reſt and refreſh themſelves. The fellow, on this, replied in the moſt churliſh tone, that the houſe behind belonged to him, and that having already ſo ſeverely ſuffered from wanderers and ſtrangers, he was determined to admit no more. "Therefore (concluded he) haſte thee on to Caſtro-Villari; you will find ſomething good enough for you there; at all events, you ſhall have nothing here."—Rodolph, exaſperated at the peaſant's uncouth denial, was on the point of diſmounting his horſe, to inſiſt on his admiſſion, when the Counteſs, reclining her head on the window of the calaſh, requeſted them in Heaven's name, to ſuffer her and another fatigued female to halt at his houſe, for a ſhort hour or ſo. The man, more moved by Iſabella's ſoothing and modeſt requeſt, than the Count's menacing looks and com-

manding tones, made anſwer, " that the women might enter with welcome, but as for the men, there was not room to accommodate them;" therefore adviſed them again to go on to Caſtro-Villari. Rodolph's pride, more than his inclination, perſuaded him to accept the fellow's council, and promiſing to diſpatch Droſi and Carlo back, in a couple of hours, for the Counteſs and Sylvia, they all rode forward to the neighbouring town.

The peaſant ſeeing their backs ſafely turned, he entered the houſe, and ſtraight a female of the moſt comely appearance iſſued from the door, to welcome the Counteſs and her fatigued companion.—They followed her in, and ſoon found themſelves comfortably houſed, with a good and homely repaſt prepared for them already by their hoſt. When they had received a ſecond blunt welcome from the peaſant, he roughly obſerved, " You are both fatigued, I ſee—hungry too, perhaps—there, ſet too—there is ſomething that will do you good—I hate ceremony, and I hate ſtrangers much more ſo—make haſte, therefore, and be gone—my daughter here will attend you—I ſhall go hence." On this, he turned round to the young woman, and ſaid, " Rachel, treat the women well. In the mean time, I ſhall go to my neighbour, Martin, and aſſiſt him in his vineyard.—Your ſervant.

—I hate ſtrangers, therefore avoid them. —A good repaſt to you both." On this, he ſallied out of the houſe.

The Counteſs and Sylvia, though much aſtoniſhed at their abrupt reception, ſat down to their pottagio with a keen appetite. Having ſufficiently refreſhed themſelves with this diſh and a glaſs of wine, the former requeſted Rachel to be ſeated; and ever anxious to enquire after Santa-Maria's fate (as ſo many precious unexpected circumſtances had occurred to warrant every enquiry) Iſabella aſked her young hoſteſs the cauſe of her father's moroſe and abrupt behaviour? The girl hesitated ſome time to reply. "Pardon the indelicacy, my dear (continued the Counteſs) of ſuch a queſtion, and be not afraid to open your heart to me—I am a mother, and an unhappy one withal—I feel for your father as a parent—I feel for you as a child alſo, and to all forlorn children, I am happy ever to be a mother." On this, Iſabella could not refrain from ſhedding tears, which being piteouſly obſerved by Rachel, ſhe caught the ſympathiſing affection; and thus briefly opened her heart to the Counteſs:

"As you appear ſo anxious, Madam, for our concerns, and ſo deſirous (ſaid Rachel) to know the cauſe of my father's harſh diſpoſition—harſh, indeed, it has only lately been, for, till of late, he was the ſofteſt and the kindeſt of parents—I

have not much time to ſpare, to narrate my ſhort tale; for in an hour or leſs he will moſt probably return—

" About two years ago, a young peaſant came to our houſe, and begged ſome employ. He was an extraordinary handſome boy, and much reſembled you, my Lady, in all his features. In very truth, when I firſt beheld your face, I could almoſt have ſworn that he had been your ſon——But I wander, Madam——My father was falconer to the Lord Angelo, and took a mighty fancy to this ſtrange youth. Finding him diligent and acute, he taught him all the arts of his profeſſion—no *hawker*, in a ſhort time, could be more expert than his engaging pupil—Alas! *engaging* I muſt call him, indeed, for in a ſhort time after his abode in our houſe, my ſiſter, Roſaline, fell deſperately in love with him. He, notwithſtanding, returned her paſſion with the greateſt coolneſs; whilſt ſhe, poor maid! pining with extreme fondneſs, took moſt grievouſly to heart. At length, her fondneſs for him obliged her to tell our father, that without her dear Claudio (for ſo was he called) ſhe muſt ſoon waſte away with grief, and ſoon expire. Our good-natured parent, on this diſcovery, blamed her for the ſilence ſhe had hitherto maintained; and with a ſmile of parental fondneſs, told her—that ſhe ſhould ſoon be happy

with her beloved Claudio; for, next to her and myſelf, he valued him above all the world; and ſhould be as overjoyed to call him his ſon, as ſhe would be to call him huſband. Happy were theſe glad aſſurances to the love-ſick Roſaline. Ardently did ſhe pant for the hour that was to make the beautiful Claudio—her's.

" On the following morning, therefore, my father propoſed the match to our young Falconer. He ſtammered and heſitated for ſome time. In reply, however, Claudio faintly ſaid, that he muſt have ſome ſhort period to conſider on the ſubject. My father, at firſt, was angry at this return, but good-naturedly laid it all to his modeſty and diffidence; of which the youth poſſeſſed an uncommon ſhare. From that day, Claudio loſt all his wonted cheerfulneſs, and frequently, with the deep ſigh of anguiſh, would graſp hold of Roſaline's hand, and weep moſt bitterly over it.—My father and ſiſter, growing at laſt impatient for the nuptial ceremony, fixed upon the wedding-day. It was fixed, alas! but, ah! never to take place; for——two days before the marriage was fixed upon to be ſolemnized at Coſenza, Claudio had clandeſtinely departed from our hoſpitable roof—never to return—Oh! never, never, my ſweeteſt Lady; for ſince that time we have had no tidings of his fate and fortunes. Ah! moſt ungrateful youth—moſt ungenerous Clau-

dio!—my ſiſter, on this, ſunk into a ſtate of deep deſpondency, which has increaſed upon her by degrees, and is now hourly expected to terminate in her diſſolution. For this, Madam, my father has ſworn to ſhut his former hoſpitable door to all ſtrangers, thinking, perhaps, that ſome ſerpent, like the former, may be nouriſhed in the boſom of his family; and then, like Claudio, ſting the tendereſt, deareſt part of it, to death."—At this latter expreſſion, Rachel leaned her head upon her knees, and throwing her hands acroſs her eyes—wept bitterly.—

The Counteſs, touched with the diſtreſs of Rachel, and too ſenſibly convinced from former circumſtances, that ſome myſtery relating to Santa-Maria was contained therein, requeſted to be ſhown into the chamber of Roſaline. The ſiſter immediately aſſented. They accordingly aſcended a narrow winding ſtair-caſe, accompanied by Sylvia, into the ſick maiden's apartment. On approaching her bed-ſide, the Counteſs too fatally perceived, that poor Roſaline—the fair and innocent martyr to love—was *indeed* in a deep decline. Her eyes and cheeks were ſunk. Her face was as the lilly, wan; and death ſeemed quick approaching to releaſe her from the vaſt load of grief and lamentation that ſhe had ſo long ſtruggled under:

Death lay on her, like an untimely froſt
Upon the ſweeteſt flow'r of all the field:
SHAKSPEARE.

Iſabella ſoftly approached the bed—Roſaline, however, remained inſenſible of her kind approach. In the very twinkling of an eye, an object ſtruck the Counteſs's view, that filled her with aſtoniſhment, anguiſh, and pity.—This object was the———bracelet encircled round Roſaline's arm, which ſhe had given to Santa-Maria, on her flight from the palace of Rodolph. Every collateral circumſtance flaſhed acroſs her imagination in a moment. On this diſcovery, Iſabella yielding to the happy influx of a mother's joy, claſped her hands, and lifting them with her eyes to Heaven, exclaimed, "God's will be done!—my child may yet be living!"

Rachel, aſtoniſhed at the ſudden fervour of this exclamation, and yielding to the influx of a ſiſter's *feelings*, with ſome indignation exclaimed, likewiſe, "And is the ungrateful—the ungenerous—the inhoſpitable, cruel Claudio then, indeed, your ſon?"—

"Delay your impatience for a while, my young friend (replied the Counteſs) let us return below, and I will fully and ingenuouſly ſatisfy your curioſity."

After they had deſcended, and in ſome degree recovered from their mutual ſurpriſe, Iſabella informed her fair hoſteſs,

that the cauſe of her ſudden tranſports was owing to the bracelet that ſhe had ſeen encircled round her ſiſter's arm. That ſame bracelet, my dear girl, was once mine, and transferred by me to one whom from *her* birth I ever valued; and from *her* loſs ſtill value more than I do my own happineſs and exiſtence. Alas! I never knew I loved *her* half ſo much till our cruel ſeparation made me conſcious of it.—I perceive your ſurprize, my dear girl, and eaſily divine the cauſe—know, then, that the boy whom you ſuppoſed to be Claudio—is my daughter—at leaſt—ſhe *was* my daughter.—Hapleſs Santa-Maria!—Ill fated Roſaline!——But hark—I hear the trampling of horſes,—therefore let me be brief.—Here, child, take this ring—wear it for my ſake;—it ſhall always be your paſſport to me.—I am the Counteſs Iſabella, wife to the Lord Rodolph. We are now on our way to the Count's Caſtle, which ſtands only twelve leagues from this ſpot, ſouth of Martorano. Diſcloſe the cruel adventure of Claudio's being my daughter, as early as you with ſafety can, to your ſiſter, Roſaline. My prayers for her recovery ſhall be offered up morning, noon, and night. When Roſaline, however, underſtands her dear Claudio was one of her own ſex, diſguiſed only to buffet the malice of the world, and to protect her from danger and inſolence, ſhe will, I hope, endeavour to con-

quer her malady—for the diſeaſe ſhe labours under now is a fever of the mind, and not the body. The former can raiſe itſelf ſuperior to all human conſiderations, let the other be ſunk never ſo deep into decay. Break this untoward myſtery to your father alſo. It may ſoften his feelings; blunt the keen edge of anger he bears to all his fellow creatures; diſperſe the clouds of melancholy that hang over his parental anxious brow; and what is ſtill more grateful to my hopes, may ſtimulate him to adminiſter the balſam of conſolation with more aſſurance than heretofore to his hapleſs child. To conclude, whether you ſucceed or no (and Heaven forefend that it ſhould be otherwiſe than what I wiſh) in your tender endeavours to reſtore ſo lovely a plant into the blooming boſom of day, let me ſpeedily know the reſult—Reſtore but your ſiſter, and I ſhall be happy. For, oh! believe me, my amiable girl, I would not have it chance, for thouſands of gold, that my daughter had been—even the innocent cauſe of any creature's deſpair and diſſolution; moſt ſpecially of the fair Roſaline's—whoſe exquiſite ſenſibility, not only merits a world of future joys and tranſports, but entitles her to the admiration and protection of every one who is bleſſed with that firſt of ſocial virtues—*a feeling heart.*"

The Counteſs had ſcarce concluded her

maternal admonitions, when Droſi and Carlo returned to eſcort her forward to Caſtro Villari—It was fortunate that the falconer did not find his way home before them, as Rachel's eyes were ſo ſwoln, and her boſom was ſo convulſed with ſobs, that would have excited his curioſity, and led him to inſiſt on a farther explanation, which at this critical juncture would have been both unpleaſant and diſtreſſing to Iſabella. She left the whole, however, deeply recorded on the ſuffering Rachel's heart —of whom, both her and Sylvia now took a moſt tender and affectionate farewell.—

CHAPTER XXIV.

Ghoſts fly on clouds, and ride on winds. They reſt together in their caves, and talk of mortal men.

OSSIAN.

They ſeemed almoſt, with ſtaring on one another, to tear the caſes of their eyes.—There was ſpeech in their dumbneſs, language in their very geſture.

SHAKSPEARE.

OUR travellers now continued their journey, till they reached Coſenza, where they halted.—Here Rodolph diſpatched a meſſenger forward to his kinſman, D'Arcos, to ſignify his near approach towards Bellito.—In two hours afterwards, they found themſelves at the gate of the Chevalier's Caſtella, and the good Knight, with his niece, Lauria, and all his houſehold, prepared, in the court yard, to receive them. As Lauria, however, was

aſſiſting the Counteſs to alight from the calaſh, the latter, ſtruck with her beauty, and the ſimilarity of years, ſhape, and manners, between her and Santa-Maria, graſped tenderly hold of her hand, and turned on one ſide to give a ſecret freedom to her tears. Lauria, notwithſtanding, perceived her emotions, and participated in them.—Theſe effuſions, however, of mutual ſympathy, ſprung from different ſources. One—thought and felt for a dear—dear child. The other, knowing the diſmal and hateful abode that was about to be the future reſidence of the Counteſs, and judging, alſo, that ſhe was conſcious of the ſame, innocently imagined, that ſhe grieved merely from that idea alone, and, being a former ſufferer there herſelf, the ſweet impulſe of ſympathy taught her to feel for the approaching ſufferings of others.

The good Chevalier entertained his gueſts that night with all the honours and hoſpitality due to their rank and affinity. D'Arcos perceived the Count anxious to have the paquet he had formerly ſent him explained—Seeing the Counteſs, however, fatigued and depreſſed by her long journey, he recommended to them an early repoſe, and then, taking an opportunity of drawing his kinſman aſide, D'Arcos informed him, that as he had ſome matters of importance to communicate,

and alone, he would defer relating them till the morning.

At an early hour, therefore, the Count and Counteſs retired—the one anxious to hear the morning wonders of D'Arcos' tale; and the other equally ſo, to form an early and more familiar correſpondence with Lauria. Rodolph conjecturing that ſome new marvellous hiſtory was about to be brought forth, from the miraculous brain of his kinſman; and Iſabella ſuppoſing that ſhe might gather ſome farther intelligence of Santa-Maria, that would form a connection with what ſhe had already collected.

Whilſt every attention was paid to the gueſts above, the retinue of Rodolph did not fail of meeting with the utmoſt good cheer below—Francoliſſe, firſt and moſt favoured domeſtic of the Chevalier and his niece, took ſpecial care of Sylvia, Carlo, and Droſi, whom he had been previouſly given to underſtand were alſo the favourite attendants of the Count and Counteſs.—He, therefore, conducted them to a neat, ſnug, little anti-chamber, exactly formed for a comfortable party of four, whilſt a larger room was allotted for their companions. In good fare, however, there was no diſtinction, and in neither party was there any envy.

Francoliſſe had juſt counted manhood, though he had been many years in the

ſervice of his good knight, and for his unſhaken fidelity, and extreme good-nature, was eſteemed above all the other domeſtics. He was ſtout and blunt, and, what rendered him a greater favourite with Lauria, he was well converſed, and would, withal, *ſpeak moſt copiouſly*.—When his gueſts, therefore, had finiſhed their antipaſto, he requeſted permiſſion to pledge them all in a glaſs of wine—"I have ſome flagons of the choiceſt lachryma-chriſti in yonder cloſet (ſaid the youth) that will cheer your ſpirits, if none of you have any objection to taſte it."

"There is one in company (obſerved Carlo, drily, and giving his uncle an arch look)—that I am ſure will have no objection to taſte of it, as long as there is a flagon left."—

"Right, boy; and, though no conjuror, like thy mother, thou canſt prophecy well and truly at times. Come, my brave lad, haul out your lachryma-chriſti, and, for thy pains (ſaid Droſi, with a view of having a little innocent revenge on his nephew) thou ſhalt have thy ſtool next this pretty damſel here. Eh! Sylvia? what ſay you, laſs?"

Francoliſſe took Droſi at his word, and having placed a large flagon of wine on the table, he fixed a ſtool for Sylvia near the fire-ſide, and ſeated himſelf directly cloſe to her. This was, at firſt, unpleaſant to the ſuſceptible feelings of Carlo;

for Francoliſſe, like himſelf, was a comely youth.——The former's good-nature, however (equalled only by that of the other's, ſoon overlooked this miſchievous trick of his uncle's) who, now wiſhing to enjoy himſelf comfortably and plentifully over a flagon of his favourite beverage, prefaced his ſecond draught with thanking Heaven, that their journey was nearly over, and that they now might think themſelves happy dogs in having found, at laſt, a reſting place for life.

On this, Francoliſſe ſhook his head, with much importance, and replied—"Heaven truly grant that you all may find it ſo?"

"Piſh—I know it—I know it (returned Droſi) and if I know it, that's enough.—Come Sylvia, my girl, take a hearty draught—the wine is excellent. No ſqueamiſhneſs, no ſhaking of your head. We ſhall all be happy, I ſay, again.—No more ſquabbling and fighting, nothing now but harmony, good feaſting, good eating, and good drinking."

Francoliſſe on this, filled the goblets round, and again ſhaking his head, as he puſhed them about, he ſaid, "I fear, my brave veteran, you will find no great harmony where you are ſhortly going to."

"And marry, why not (replied Droſi) explain boy—I fear nought, no not I."—

"Aye, uncle (obſerved Carlo) I know

you fear no man—no, nor any human dangers. But in good faith, my heart *forebodes* ſome ill, in going to this ſame Caſtle."

"Alack-a-day! and ſo doth mine," returned Sylvia, with a heavy ſigh.

"And in plain truth, ſo ye may (exclaimed Francoliſſe) Ah! I ſhall never forget the times when I was there; after my maſter had taken poſſeſſion of the Caſtle. When Lord Rodolph conſigned it over to the protection of my maſter, the Chevalier, we were all haſtened thither, and not a night afterwards did we enjoy the leaſt repoſe. Such continued knockings, ſuch hammerings, as though all the maſons in Naples were at work within the Caſtle. Such frightful warnings and lamentations.—The chapel tapers extinguiſhed at one moment, and then illumined on the next; and Heaven only knows by whom. The black banners hoiſted on one night, at top of one tower, and on the next fixed on another—Oh! Lord have mercy upon ye all, and grant ye patience and fortitude to ſupport theſe trying, melancholy ſcenes."

The pencil and not the pen, could beſt deſcribe the alternate emotions of fear, ſurpriſe, and horror, that ran through the features of Carlo and Sylvia, at this terrible deſcription given of the Caſtle.—Neither could ſpeak—they ſat ſtaring and gaping in each other's faces, as though

they had been petrified.—Droſi, however, was not ſo ſoon alarmed, but putting down the flagon on the table, which had been ſuſpended between his breaſt and his mouth, for the laſt minute or two; he exclaimed—"Hold, hold, my lad—come, come, this is going a little too far.—You are a good hand, I find, at romancing—where did you pick up all this—did you find it in Merlin's Cave; or did your grandam teach you, to get it by heart?—It's a rare invention, in faith, and almoſt makes me laugh. I like your ingenuity, my lad—but ſee, how you have ſcared that chicken-hearted mongril there.—His dam, I remember, was alſo a rare one at theſe rhodomontade ſtories. She propheſied once, that a gooſe would fly away with the Monte di Somma—Hoiſting black banners, indeed!—you better had told us, whilſt you were about it, that they had hoiſted black devils round all the turrets and towers in the Caſtle."

"For holy St. Mark's ſake, uncle (tremblingly exclaimed Carlo) don't be ſo prophane—don't talk of devils, I *conjure* you; but ſuffer Francoliſſe to proceed in his ſtory about the Caſtle, that we may be put on our guard againſt all evil ſpirits and dæmons." This requeſt being ſtrongly ſeconded by the trembling Sylvia alſo, Droſi conſented to hear out the rhodomontade tale of the Caſtle (as he called it.)—

Though on condition that he might afterwards tell the ſtory of the devil having once flown away with the Pope's night-cap, as he lay ſnoring in the Vatican. "That old witch, Carlo's dam (ſaid he) told me all about it, and I have never forgot it ſince."

CHAPTER XXV.

No nat'ral exhalation in the ſky,
No 'ſcape of nature, no diſtemper'd day,
No common wind, no cuſtomed event,
But they will pluck away its natural cauſe,
And call them meteors, prodigies, and ſigns
Abortive, preſages, and tongues of Heaven.

SHAKSPEARE.

"THE Count and Counteſs (continued Francoliſſe) I well know from my young miſtreſs, Lauria, are to hear what I am now about to relate; otherwiſe, if ſilence had been enjoined, not a word of the matter ſhould have eſcaped from my lips. Our ſilence, notwithſtanding, would ſhortly have availed little, as it will arrive but too ſoon to your own knowledge;—therefore, as I ſaid before, when we were all ordered into the caſtle, nothing but theſe diſmal noiſes could be diſtinguiſhed—They began about mid-night, and nearly ended by ſun-riſe. I was greatly alarmed, and was on the point of quitting the good knight's ſervice."

"Lack-a-day! Lack-a-day! (exclaimed Carlo and Sylvia, in one breath)—and well you might."

" I beſeech ye, friends (obſerved Francoliſſe) do not interrupt me, or you will break the thread of my ſtory."

" Right, right, boy (exclaimed Droſi, emptying off a whole goblet of wine, and laughing all the time in the ſleeve of his doublet);—you muſt not be interrupted, as it may *diſturb* your ſtory.—And if that ſcare-crow in the corner there, offers to do ſo again, I will expoſe him, by telling the ſtory of his mother's enticing a young man to go and gather her ſome enchanting herbs, that ſhe ſaid grew upon Mount St. Goddard. But when he got about two miles high, he was aſſaulted with a great heap of ſnow and ſtones, which with the violence of the wind, whirled him headlong to the very bottom of *The Bridge of Hell.*—And for what we all know, the poor young fellow may be there ſtill."

Thus Droſi mended the buſineſs, by throwing three ſtones for one. Francoliſſe, however, finding all ſilent again, thus reſumed his ſtory:——

" Well, I was greatly alarmed, and, as I ſaid before, was frequently on the point of quitting the good knight's ſervice. He laughed, however, at my fears, when I mentioned the doleful noiſes that I had heard. *My* young Lady, Lauria, who, though ſhe ſlept above, near the weſtern tower, was alarmed alſo at the nightly diſturbances that came acroſs her repoſe. She firſt mentioned it to her uncle, and then

to *me*. He likewiſe ridiculed the idleneſs of her fancy, though, as I have often obſerved, he himſelf frequently appeared gloomy and diſconcerted when he aroſe. Well, when my Lady Lauria ſpoke to *me* on the ſubject, ſhe entered upon it with all that great learning which ſhe is poſſeſſed of. '*Francoliſſe* (ſaid my Lady) nothing diſturbs me ſo much, as thoſe mighty ringing of bells. When theſe ſame bells ring (continued ſhe) it is a certain demonſtration, that ſome one or another is about to expire. My uncle, you well know, has ſearched over the moſt ſecret parts of the caſtle, and he can diſcover no human being, nor the cauſe of theſe nocturnal ſoundings. When this doleful bell, therefore, rings thus nightly, it muſt proceed from ſupernatural effects. It muſt either denote that ſome Chriſtian ſoul is juſt departing, to beſpeak the prayers of his brethren and ſiſterhood; or, on the other hand, to drive away the evil ſpirits that ſtand about the bed's foot, and about the houſe, ready to ſeize their prey, or at leaſt to terrify and moleſt the ſoul in its paſſage. But *Francoliſſe* (again obſerved *my* learned young Lady) there may have been ſome murder committed in this caſtle. In that caſe, the ringing of bells will keep the ſpirits away. For ſpirits, particularly evil ones, are much afraid of bells. Ever ſince we have reſided here, the hammerings and the ſounds of the bell have increaſed; for the

louder the ſound—mark me, *Francoliſſe*—the louder the ſound, the ſpirit or ſpirits muſt go farther off to be clear of the noiſe; beſides, being heard farther off, it will likewiſe procure the poor departed ſoul a greater number of prayers. This diſlike of ſpirits to bells is, as (according to what I have heard my good old grandame ſay) the evil ſpirits that be in the region of the air, do mock when they hear the bells ringing, and that is the cauſe why the bells be rung when it thunders, and when great tempeſts and outrages of weather happen; to the end that the fiends and wicked ſpirits ſhould be abaſhed and fly, and ceaſe the moving of the tempeſt.'

" In this manner (continued Francoliſſe, though not without being frequently interrupted by the bubbling of the lachryma-chriſti, as it deſcended in torrents down Droſi's throat, and ſome half intelligible curſes muttered by him againſt all witches, old dams, and grandams) did *my* young Lady learnedly expreſs herſelf to *me*.—When, at the concluſion of her ſtory, the alarum bell rang two hours before its uſual time. It never ſtruck before till midnight, and at this time, it wanted full two hours of its former ſounding. It ſtruck, moreover, louder to my Lady's ears than it ever did before.—She ſtarted from her ſeat, unuſually alarmed and amazed.—The bell continued ringing ſtill louder and louder, when ſhe departed

in haſte to her own apartment; ſaying, as ſhe went—'*Francoliſſe*, I will not, I cannot ſtay longer in this deteſted Caſtle; for it is, no doubt, haunted by ſome murderers or evil ſpirits. 'On this ſhe haſtened to the chamber where her women were; and I immediately repaired to the refectory, and repeated to my brother domeſtics, what had juſt paſſed between *me* and *my* Lady."

"And now (ſaid Droſi, interrupting Francoliſſe) as you have told us I ſuppoſe, all that paſſed between *you* and *your* Lady—what ſay ye all—and you too, my little Sylvia, to drink her Ladyſhip's health?"

To this they all readily conſented—though Carlo could not drink off his wine, before he had paid many highflown compliments to the great learning of Lady Lauria; and the ſublime ideas ſhe poſſeſſed in regard to fiends, evil ſpirits, and ſupernatural agency.—"Her wonderful arguments (he ſaid) reſpecting the neceſſity of ringing the bells to keep off thoſe fiends and diſturbed ſpirits, dwelt ſtrongly on his mind, and which would be treaſured up in his memory as long as he lived."

Droſi could not refrain from laughing at the ſimplicity in which he uttered theſe laſt words. Then, after expreſſing a hearty wiſh that the fiends, or ſpirits, or whatever they were, would give them a hearty peal, when they marched into the

Caſtle; he told Francoliſſe, he might proceed if he choſe, and that after he had done, he would give them the ſtory of Carlo's mother—about the devil and the pope.

CHAPTER XXVI.

——— A thouſand fantaſies
Begin to throng into my memory,
Of calling ſhapes, and beck'ning ſhadows dire,
And airy tongues, that ſyllable men's names
On ſands, and ſhores, and deſert wilderneſſes.
MILTON.

DROSI being once more ſilent, Francoliſſe thus proceeded in his ſtory, without any farther interruption:

"Well, when I joined the company of my fellow ſervants in the refectory, the tolling of the alarum bell had ceaſed. It was near midnight when I had concluded my ſtory. The very—very moment, however, that I had finiſhed the ſame, a louder ringing was heard than before—It was the loudeſt we had heard ſince our reſidence in the Caſtle.—We all ſtarted up, ſcared almoſt out of our ſenſes—never did I hear any thing ſo extraordinarily marvellous. The Chevalier, during our fright, entered the refectory, alarmed at the noiſe himſelf, with his ſword drawn. "It is wonderful (exclaimed the knight, as the bell continued to toll, and, at the ſame time, impreſſively graſping the hilt of his ſword between his two hands)—this is wonderful,

indeed!"—The Chevalier ſpoke theſe few words with uncommon energy—the bell ſtill continued to ſound, and now, as loud as its clapper would admit.—This laſt peal brought Signiora Lauria down again, who exclaimed, as ſhe deſcended into the refectory—" Oh! my dear uncle, I cannot, nay, will not, abide longer in this horrid Caſtle."—This determined avowal, produced a general effect; for we, one and all, declared our reſolution thereon, either to quit the Caſtle, or yield up our ſervices.—The Knight, on this, took hold of his niece's hand, and affectionately aſſured her, that early in the morning, we ſhould all leave the Caſtle, for our former tranquil abode. This, you may be ſure, was a more welcome ſound to us than any we had hitherto heard; and ſuch was our joy, that we all ſet up a general ſhout on the occaſion. Our joy, however, was ſhortly changed to freſh terror and amazement, more ſo than we had ever experienced before; for the troubled ſpirit of the Caſtle, or whatever it might be, in order to ſtrengthen us ſtill farther in our fixed reſolution, tolled the bell exactly three times, in ſlow and ſolemn changes.—During this interval of awful ſilence, we heard, with horror inexpreſſible, a diſtant and feeble voice ſlowly exclaim———

" *Haſte—begone—intrude yourſelves no longer in a place that belongs to virtue, for-*

row, and devotion; for here none but the noble and true poſſeſſor ſhall ever find repoſe.'

Theſe words were alſo repeated three times. Heaven knows, we heard them diſtinctly enough the firſt, without the inviſible agent repeating them again. My Lady Lauria, when ſhe had recovered a little from this laſt ſhock, faintly obſerved, that her fears and weakneſs would not ſuffer her to part from her uncle that night. My Lord, though ſtruck with unuſual aſtoniſhment, ſummoned his wonted fortitude and preſence of mind together, then addreſſing himſelf to us all, he aſked, who dared to venture, once more, with him, to explore the Caſtle over and over again?—'For, that there is ſome human agent concealed therein (ſaid he) I have not the ſhadow of a doubt. To ſuppoſe, for a moment, alſo, that the voice we juſt heard, was any thing of a ſupernatural nature, would be the height of folly, ignorance, credulity, and ſuperſtition. Or, to imagine, likewiſe, that the ringing of an alarum bell, was the effect of the winds, would be equally ſo.—Who, then (concluded the knight) will follow and aſſiſt me, in endeavouring, for the laſt time, to unravel this ſtrange myſtery?'

"Perceiving our Lord determined, we all readily conſented to follow him.—Signiora Lauria, however, on ſeeing this, caught hold of *my* cloak and exclaimed—

'*Francoliſſe*, you muſt continue here with me and the females, for here with them alone, I cannot remain.'—The Chevalier hearing this, ordered me to remain with his niece, though I hardly knew at the time, whether to prefer going with my fellow-ſervants, or ſtaying where I was. To make ſhort, however, of this eventful tale (ſaid Francoliſſe, obſerving Droſi getting drowſy, and in danger every moment of tumbling from his ſtool) my Lord D'Arcos, in an hour or more, returned, without being able to ſatisfy himſelf a jot farther than he had ever done before.—On this, we ſat all together in the refectory for that night, and, early in the morning, after faſtening all the gates, and ſecuring the keys, we, with overjoyed hearts, retired to our old peaceful manſion here."

The effect that Francoliſſe's ſtory of the Caſtle had upon Carlo and Sylvia, correſponded with all the horrors they would have experienced had they been actual auditors of the terrors that he had only related.—The greateſt effect it had upon Droſi, was nearly ſetting him into a ſound ſleep, which would certainly have been the caſe, had he not politely determined within himſelf to ſee his old friend, lachryma-chriſti, ſafe out, before he went to bed. Had that, however, not been the caſe, Droſi would have paid as much attention as he poſſibly could have done to Francoliſſe's ſtory, had it been ten times

more marvellous; for civility and good-nature were the predominant features of his character—particularly to the friendly ſtranger—whilſt gratitude and attention were ever uppermoſt in his breaſt, when hoſpitality ſtretched forth her generous hand to afford him comfort and good cheer.

As for Carlo and Sylvia, they continued ſome time ſpeechleſs. The former, however, having recovered his tongue, firſt exclaimed, "That he would not go on to the Caſtle."

"Nor I, either, Carlo," returned Sylvia.

"Then marry, coward (ſaid Droſi, after his old friend had revived and warmed him a little,) whither will you go?"

"I am no coward, uncle, but I will go wander in the foreſts firſt."

"And I alſo," replied the ſimple Sylvia.

"What (returned Droſi) to ſtarve, and afterwards afford delicate food to hawks and carrions? Or, to put your courage really to the proof, to meet with deſperate robbers and hungry wolves?—Can you fight with them, think ye, chicken? Or which prefer ye—which would you chooſe hen-hearted poltroon, to be minced in pieces by a banditti, or nibbled to atoms by a horde of wild beaſts?—Quotha! what have either of you to fear now? Spirits will not devour ye.——Oons——Spirits, I hear, have no bodies, nor blood, nor guts, to ſtomach ſuch a brace of delicate mortals

as ye are! Are thy conſciences good? if they are, why then be afraid of ſpirits? My honeſt friend here has told a marvellous good round tale, and excellently well withal. It ſuits your nature and complexion well, thou half-bearded fool—what, thou haſt not forgot the notions of that prepoſterous old witch, your mother. I thought I had beat them all out of thy credulous ſkull; or am I to begin my labour over again?"

Theſe ſevere retorts of Droſi not only altered the firſt reſolutions of Carlo and Sylvia, but occaſioned much chagrin in the countenance of Francoliſſe. The latter obſerved, that he talked it well, "But marry, my friend (ſaid he) if the Caſtle is troubled with ſuch gueſts as were there about four years ago, you will not long abide there; no, notwithſtanding all your mighty boaſtings."

"Be not heated, my good young friend (exclaimed Carlo, perceiving his uncle nettled, being called a *boaſter*; for touch but on Droſi's courage with any kind of contempt, all friendſhip with him at once was at an end) be not heated, I ſay. My uncle is ſomewhat choleric, and rather ſevere withal. I will not ſay churliſh—no—no—(perceiving Droſi looking him full in the face) no—no—not at all churliſh—not in the leaſt, I aſſure you; a little pleaſant or ſo; that's all. But in anſwer (continued Carlo with much gravity) to what

you both have ſaid, I can only add, that I believe your ſtory of the Caſtle, Signior Francoliſſe, to be probable and true; but then whatever ſpirit, or fiend, or devil, might have haunted it four years ago, might have been calmed by this time.—The ringing of the bell (as Signiora Lauria ſo learnedly obſerved on the occaſion) at that diſtant period, might be owing to ſome Chriſtian ſoul juſt departing, to beſpeak the prayers of his brethren and ſiſterhood; or, on the other hand, to drive away the evil ſpirits that ſtand about the bed's foot, and about the houſe, ready to ſeize their prey; or at leaſt to terrify and moleſt the ſoul on its paſſage. Theſe obſtacles, after ſo long a courſe of time, therefore, may have been removed, and the bells, of courſe, have ceaſed to ring. At leaſt, it is to be ſuppoſed that the one will die away with the other—But if, again, as Signiora Lauria obſerved (continued Carlo, with great critical dignity) there has been any murder committed in the Caſtle; in that caſe, the ringing of bells will keep the ſpirits away, for ſpirits (particularly evil ones, as ſhe ſaid) are much afraid of bells—now, obſerve me, is it not very probable, that ſome perſon in this old Caſtle has been murdered at one time or another (whether formerly or not); if that has really been the caſe, is it not more preferable to be continually

dinned with the ringing of bells, as it keeps the ſpirits away, rather than by the diſcontinuing of this ringing, have the ſpirits perpetually ſtalking all night long about the Caſtle, and ſitting themſelves down at our bed's feet, when we all want to go quietly and ſoberly to our pillows? What think ye, uncle, is this reaſon, or is it not?"

Droſi could not help enjoying the ſimplicity of his nephew; though there was a *particular part* in his *laſt argument* that had forced itſelf upon his attention.

"And then, again (continued Carlo, pleaſed with the ſuppoſed attention his uncle paid to his great power of reaſoning) what ſaid Signiora Lauria's learned grandame, on the ſubject?—why—That the bells ring when it thunders, and when great tempeſts and outrages of weather happen, to the end that the fiends and wicked ſpirits ſhould be abaſhed, and fly, and ceaſe the moving of the tempeſt.—If ſo, ſhould we not conſider the ringing of the bells as a happy omen to forewarn us of our approaching danger, to prepare ourſelves for hurricanes, eruptions and earthquakes, ſo common among us—for what are they but great tempeſts and outrages of weather?' Under all theſe favourable influences, I would therefore prefer going thither, than being minced by a banditti, or nibbled to pieces by wolves (for this remark of Droſi's had at the time a wonder-

ful effect both on Carlo and Sylvia; it had alſo led him into the above learned diſſertation—though, like him, we all endeavour to reconcile ourſelves to a comparative ill when we can avoid a ſuperlative one)—and, as for what you ſaid, uncle (continued he) about that prepoſterous old witch, my mother—you wrong her—for ſhe was alike good and devout, and not at all unſkilful in prophecy; for I do not know whether it may turn out true or not, but I recollect ſhe told me, that I ſhould ſee and hear ſtrange things about my twenty-third year; and that all this ſhould take place in a ſtrange Caſtle."

" By St. Marco (exclaimed Droſi, perceiving there would be no end to his nephew's ſtories, if he was ſuffered to go on at his own will) no more of your folly, ſirrah, or I will hurl this flagon at your ſhallow pate!" All angry words, however, were now put an end to by the watch-porter's entering and announcing the hour of ſeparation. On this, they all drank good repoſe to each other, and parted as they had met, contented, convivial, and friendly.

CHAPTER XXVII.

The courſe of true love never did run ſmooth,
Or, if there were a ſympathy in choice,
War, death, or ſickneſs did lay ſiege to it,
Making it momentary as a ſound,
Swift as a ſhadow, ſhort as any dream.

——— Like the lily
That once was miſtreſs of the field, and flouriſh'd,
I'll hang my head and periſh.——SHAKSPEARE.

WHEN the matin-bell had rung for breakfaſt, an unexpected confuſion enſued throughout the whole manſion. The minſtrel, Florizel, and deareſt companion of Lauria, was miſſing, and no where to be found. He had not been ſeen, in fact, at his hoſpitable abode moſt part of the preceding day, nor during the whole night. Fear, diſtraction, and confuſion, predominated alternately in every quarter; for Florizel had not only been the deareſt favourite of his young miſtreſs, but alſo the choiceſt of the Chevalier's, and, indeed, with every domeſtic in the Caſtella; a partiality he had ſucceſsfully and deſervedly obtained, not only by his exquiſite ſkill on the *lute*, but alſo by his good nature, modeſty, ſoftneſs, and beauty.

The good old knight, terrified leſt Florizel ſhould be ſurpriſed in his excurſions about the foreſt, or on the banks of the river Crati (both of which were ſometimes viſited by robbers, and the Corſairs of Barbary) immediately diſpatched Francoliſſe,

and all his domeſtics, by different ways, in ſearch of him.

Lauria, in the mean time, accompanied by the Lady Iſabella, diſconſolately retired to her apartment, to ruminate on the loſs and uncertain fate of Florizel—no one (as we have already frequently obſerved) was more capable of applying the healing balſam of conſolation to the wounded mind, than the amiable Counteſs of Rodolph. Her tender applications ſhortly probed the wound, and afforded vent to the ſevere anguiſh it contained; for, Lauria, entirely *forgetting* the taſk allotted to her by the Chevalier, of privately diſcloſing the myſteries of the Caſtle to her noble gueſt; and contemplating alone on the ſudden abſence of her dear Florizel, ſhe tremblingly claſped hold of the Counteſs's hand, and bedewing it with her tears——Lauria—the agonized Lauria—with irreſiſtible tenderneſs, exclaimed——"Oh! my dear Lady Iſabella—ſuffer me—Oh! ſuffer me to lay my whole heart open to you.—You have been a wife—a mother—all—all that is dear and kind have you been—Forgive me, Lady, I have heard all from my moſt affectionate father.—Father, I always call the good Chevalier D'Arcos, for ſuch he has ever been to me. Pardon me——But—he has told me all concerning ——your daughter, Santa-Maria. Nay, do not weep—this only have I mentioned as a prelude to my ſad hiſtory.—Each of us, thus conſcious of

our mutual misfortunes may be more fully enabled to adminiſter unto each other the leſſons of comfort, reſignation, and fortitude. Alas! (ſaid Lauria, her tears and ſighs almoſt choaking her utterance) I need thoſe leſſons much. Oh! my Lady, look *upon me* now as your daughter—feel for me as ſuch, and guide my wandering ſenſes how to ſteer through the vortex of miſery and diſappointment, in which they are now enlabyrinthed.

" It is nearly bordering on two years (continued Lauria, ſtrengthened and conſoled by Lady Iſabella's tenderneſs, and her kind aſſurances of an unabated mother's friendſhip and affection) when Florizel, the minſtrel, who has ſo unexpectedly cauſed the alarm you have heard, came firſt into the ſervice of my uncle—I heard him playing on his lute in the foreſt hard bye, and touched with the ſweetneſs of his melody, invited him to our manſion. He accompanied me and my female attendant (though not till after a great many perſuaſions) directly homewards.—The Chevalier, like me, was as much pleaſed with the innocence and modeſty of his looks and demeanour, as he was at the exquiſite ſkill with which he touched his lute. Upon this, he invited him to accept of an aſylum in his manſion. Florizel conſented with pleaſure and gratitude; and the firſt taſk, or rather recreation, that he undertook, was teaching me

to play upon his lute. Finding me an apt ſcholar, he requeſted my uncle to provide another inſtrument, that we might alternately entertain him with our harmony. He of courſe cheerfully aſſented, and many and oft's the time, that I have heard the good knight declare, that thoſe have been the happieſt hours of his life when we played to him on our lutes.—Not to treſpaſs tediouſly, my Lady, on your patience, by dwelling too long on the many, many happy days that we thus innocently enjoyed together, I became ſo fondly enamoured of the youth, that nought but the nuptial ceremony could relieve my love-ſick heart. Often would I exclaim to Florizel—Oh! that thou hadſt been nobler born; for, in mind, thou couldſt not be nobler engifted. To this only would Florizel reply with a deep ſigh—Finding my paſſion, however, for him daily increaſe, I worked up my mind to the determined reſolution of diſcloſing the ſecret workings of my ſoul to the Chevalier. This I conceived firſt to be my ſtricteſt duty. Compliance I did not, indeed, expect. My duty, however, being thus far diſcharged, I was determined, if my fond applications were repulſed, to conſult my future happineſs without controul. I ſaid nothing to my adored Florizel, reſpecting my intention. It is now, my Lady, only four days ſince, when with trembling ſteps, I entered my un-

ele's cloſet; with a voice equally agitated I briefly diſcloſed my paſſion—The dear —the good—the tender knight heard me out with patience; and then—Oh! what ſudden joy and ſurprize I experienced, when, inſtead of an expected refuſal, he cheered my ſpirits with the ſmile of compliance; and affectionately laying hold of my hand, thus kindly made me anſwer—'Lauria, my moſt amiable Lauria—you have now only repeated, what I have diſcovered long before. I perceived your paſſion for young Florizel, and only attended with anxiety to ſee, whether you preferred joining your hand and heart with wealth, title, and dignity, or to merit, modeſty, and virtue. Lauria, well am I acquainted with your heart and diſpoſition.

"Well alſo have I ſearched into the nature of your adored Florizel, and have found it equally virtuous, pure, and meritorious.- Therefore, take your Florizel. He will make you happy; aye, my adopted girl, happier than could a diadem perhaps. I hate diſtinctions when virtue interferes, much more ſo, when with virtue comes *ſmiling inclination*.—I am not, my deareſt Lauria, without fame and honour. My *own* actions have ranked me high upon our Neapolitan liſts; and though the *youngeſt* brother of your deceaſed father, my wealth will make ye happy and independent. But the creſt I wiſh *you* to wear, is

virtue leagued with modeſty and merit, In you and Florizel, they are all combined. Therefore, my child (concluded the Chevalier, folding me tenderly in his arms) receive the bleſſings of your affectionate uncle, and do you, yourſelf, diſcloſe to Florizel the extreme happineſs and excellent tranſports, he is about to enjoy with you."

At this part of Lauria's narrative, the recollection of her uncle's fondneſs, and the cruel abſence of Florizel, fixed her in a ſtate of ſilent deſpondency for ſome minutes. In theſe moments Iſabella's prompting angel whiſpered in her ear, that the minſtrel, Florizel, was no other than her daughter, Santa-Maria. His beauty, modeſty, and moſt particularly his exquiſite ſkill upon the lute, almoſt confirmed him to be ſo. The Counteſs took this pauſe of Lauria for farther reflection. "If thus it proves (thought Iſabella) that this ſame minſtrel is truly Santa-Maria; I am firſt completely bleſſed, in the fond idea that ſhe is ſtill alive; and next, that I may ſhortly ſee her once again. Still (conceived the prudent matron) ſtill, it will be dangerous to manifeſt the feelings that I have already done, on my happy journey hither, and on ſimilar occaſions. My ſilence may keep the beautiful Lauria from deſpair, for whilſt hope exiſts, expectation will be indulged; and—

The miserable have no other medicine
But only hope. SHAKSPEARE.

At the same time, it was doubtful to her that when the Count became informed that she had been so near at hand, and could not as yet be probably removed to any great distance off, that his resentment and head-strong temper might revive his turbulent and unrelenting soul once more to persecute and harrass his wandering child, for the empty vanity of his honour and his house—"*Alas! alas* (concluded Isabella in her own mind) *would to God, that my lost boy, Ferdinand, the beautiful counterpart of his unfortunate sister, was but now alive, to render the love-distracted Lauria happy in all her fondest* FEMALE *transports and expectations!*"

Signiora Lauria, after apologizing for her sudden absence of mind, thus continued—"Notwithstanding the tender encouragement, my Lady, that I had received from my uncle, I had not courage enough to disclose it to the young and beautiful Florizel. My modesty refused me that gratification; and I requested the Chevalier to relate the subject of our interview himself. He consented to this as readily as he had done before to the other.

"The time appointed by my uncle, for this purpose, was the following evening. At that time I usually took my rambles in the neighbouring forest. On the morning, however, preceding this, I met Flo-

rizel in the hall, and he then appeared to my fond imagination, more cheerful and beautiful than I had ever obſerved him to be before. Being enchanted, as it were, with his vivacity and the tranſcendant luſtre that beamed unconſcious from his ſparkling eyes, I anticipated my good uncle's deſign, and I may ingenuouſly add, with the moſt delicious ſatisfaction.—Florizel received the intelligence with tears of joy, and tenderly preſſing his downy lips to mine, exclaimed—'Then I ſhall be—happy, indeed.——The—happieſt of——' and here his tranſports interrupted his articulation.—This mutual, though ſilent declaration of reciprocal love, ſwam like a new, a Heaven-gifted birth into my ſoul—It raiſed my ſpirits to the utmoſt zenith of exultation, delight, and joy; for never till then did I experience ſenſations ſo exquiſitely ſublime. To conclude, therefore, my Lady, after we had given and received the fondeſt congratulations on our approaching happineſs; Florizel, drew a diamond croſs from his neck, and putting it round mine, exclaimed—Accept this, my deareſt Signiora, as a pledge of the everlaſting affection I ſhall continue to bear you.—It was beſtowed on me, by the deareſt and moſt amiable of friends; ſince that period of its gift, I have found none ſo deſerving of wearing it as yourſelf.—Tranſported with this freſh and precious

emblem of mutual tenderneſs, I eagerly ſnatched the ring from off my finger, that had been given to me by my dying aunt, and nearly repeating my beſt love's words (for I had the very ſame occaſion for them) I placed it on his.—Florizel accepted the boon with rapture, though as he kiſſed it, I could perceive the tear gliding down his beauteous cheek. Theſe love ceremonies being performed, we parted with repeated vows of conſtancy and affection.—But alas! ſince that hour—ah! woe is me—that very hour—my darling minſtrel has not been ſeen or heard of (as it is reported) in or near our manſion."—

Here the poor agonized Lauria, ſighed heavily and pauſed;—her fair countenance, for ſome moments was ſo ſtrongly and wildly agitated, with love and diſappoinment, as to ſtrike the tender boſom of Iſabella with the moſt poignant anguiſh. A flood of tears, however, happily found their paſſage from her ſwoln eyes, and afforded a temporary relief to the oppreſſion of her mind. On this, Lauria had recourſe to the only pleaſing conſolation, that was at preſent left her—the gift of her beloved Florizel.—She drew it, therefore, from the ſoft and ſecret avenues of her throbbing boſom—kiſſed it with ecſtaſy indeſcribable, whilſt the ſcalding tear of anguiſh, fell unconſcious on the holy relic;—then keeping it fixed before her eye, ſhe offered up a brief, a fervent

prayer, to the immaculate being, whoſe ſacred antitype it was—to watch over and protect the pious and virtuous Florizel—to reſtore him in ſafety to her arms; and when ſanctioned by his divine rites, to crown their mutual loves, with his propitious ſmiles.

But here, oh! how can I deſcribe the emotions of the Lady Iſabella, when ſhe beheld the ſame croſs preſented by her to Santa-Maria, held forth directly to her view. All her former ſurmiſes of the minſtrel, were now eſtabliſhed, without leaving the ſhadow of a doubt behind.

Had Lauria been ever ſo deeply abſorbed in reflection, the ſudden alteration of Lady Iſabella's countenance and manner, and the viſible perturbation of her ſpirits, could not well have eſcaped her. Perceiving her eyes, however, ſtedfaſtly fixed upon the crucifix ſhe held in her hand, Lauria, with an equal degree of ſurprize and agitation, queſtioned her on the cauſe thereof.—The Counteſs on this quick appeal to her feelings, inſtantly recollected herſelf, and with a recovered air and tone, calmly replied.—" That ſhe had been contemplating with ſome degree of aſtoniſhment, how the minſtrel could have obtained a jewel of ſuch conſiderable value, to beſtow?"

This replication carried along its intended effect; the unſuſpecting, unhappy

Lauria, immediately obſerved thereon—"That ſhe had often ſeen the croſs, before it came into her poſſeſſion, and as often diſcovered Florizel on his knees, in fervent prayer before it. I wondered alſo, my deareſt Lady, how he came by ſo valuable a jewel, but as I had often queſtioned him before, relating his birth, and the other circumſtances of his fortunes; and always finding the ſubjects irritable to his feelings, my delicacy and fondneſs for Florizel, would never afterwards ſuffer me to interrogate him farther on them, or any other."

Juſt as Lauria had finiſhed this obſervation, ſhe diſcovered Francoliſſe entering the court-yard; and, followed by the Counteſs, precipitately deſcended towards the hall. Here ſhe was met by her uncle, who with tears burſting from his aged eyes, informed his diſtracted niece, that Florizel, notwithſtanding the moſt diligent ſearch and enquiry, could no where be found. On theſe mournful heart-breaking tidings, Lauria turned from her adopted parent, and without uttering a ſingle word, aſcended once more to her chamber; there to yield herſelf up to all thoſe bitter, galling, hell-created agonies of deſpair, that accompany diſappointed love. Lady Iſabella would have followed, but Lauria refuſed. Solitude was more welcome by far.—The frantic maiden ſoon hurried into her apartment, and faſtening the door, to guard off any of-

ficious intruſion, ſhe threw herſelf deſpondently on the bed—rent her fine hair—called upon her loſt love—her beloved Florizel; and at each fond remembrance of paſt endearments, the guſhing tears burſt from her blood-ſhot eyes—

Like dew-drops from the lion's mane.

SHAKSPEARE.

The Counteſs, in the mean time, though urged by the good Chevalier, very prudently refuſed to perſevere in accompanying his niece to her chamber.—Grief ſo bitter, ſo piercing as her's, was beſt allayed by ſolitude; all conſolation, ſhe knew, would at firſt rather aggravate, than alleviate the violence of her ſorrows.—Iſabella, alas! had well learned that ſad leſſon, by woeful experience.—She had her ſorrows too (as we have already ſeen) and bitter ones withal.—

The Counteſs having retired likewiſe to her own chamber, ſhe began to purſue the ſame train of reflections as had lately occurred, in regard to the hapleſs Roſaline.—That her wandering child had been the cauſe, though innocently ſo, of both her's and Lauria's deſpair, gave her the moſt poignant anguiſh. Her *oath*, however, ſo ſolemnly given to her Almighty Creator, at Bianca's cottage, and at a period, when the ſucceeding fatal adventures reached beyond the bounds of her mind's probability, accounted for the duplicity (if we can call it by ſo harſh a name) that ſhe had ex-

erciſed both towards Roſaline and Lauria. The Counteſs, however, was reſolved to obtain permiſſion of Lord Rodolph, for herſelf and Sylvia, to remain behind, for a time, at the Chevalier's Caſtella; to watch over and adminiſter every maternal conſolation to the love-enthuſiaſt Lauria; and that then, if, after a reaſonable period had elapſed, her grief did not take a more favourable turn, Iſabella ultimately determined within herſelf, to diſcloſe the ſecret of Santa-Maria's ſex and birth, as ſhe before had done to the amiable ſiſter of Roſaline.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

Strange things I have in head, that will to hand,
Which muſt be acted, ere they may be ſcann'd.
Didſt thou but know the inly touch of love,
Thou would'ſt as ſoon go kindle fire with ſnow.
As ſeek to quench the fire of love with words.

SHAKSPEARE.

THE ſudden alarm of Florizel's abſence, and the ſucceeding intelligence that Francoliſſe gave, of his ill ſucceſs in his enquiries after the hapleſs fugitive, retarded the appointed interview between the Chevalier and his noble gueſt. It was not till the evening, therefore, before Rodolph was conducted into the private cloſet of D'Arcos. The Count ſeated himſelf in an attitude of reflection, but turning his eye unconſciouſly about the chamber, the firſt objects that came acroſs him—were

the very pictures of Rinaldo and Santa-Maria, that he had formerly discovered, concealed within the despoiled trunks at the Castle. He made no particular observation on this hateful discovery, but uttered within himself.—" For ever and ever, are these portraits represented to my view."

D'Arcos perceived the discomposure of his guest, and lamented both the cause, and his forgetfulness to have removed the pictures previous to their conference. He had preserved them thus, in his private closet, in sweet remembrance of the once happy beings they so exactly represented. The good knight, however, did not give the Lord Rodolph much time for reflection, but being seated, he related the whole history of——the continual knockings—such hammerings, as though all the masons in Naples were at work within the Castle.—Such frightful warnings and lamentations.—-The chapel tapers extinguished at one moment, and then illumined on the next, and Heaven only knows by whom. The black banners hoisted on one night, at top of one tower, and on the next fixed upon another. The ringing of bells, with the distant and feeble voice, that invisibly exclaimed—-" Haste—begone—intrude not yourselves no longer in a place that belongs to virtue, sorrow, and devotion!—For here none but the noble and true possessor shall ever find repose."

——In ſhort, the Chevalier diſcloſed the whole of what Francoliſſe had related before (though in language more refined, and void of all ſuperſtitious commentaries) concerning his tale of the Caſtle.

Rodolph liſtened with as much credit and attention to the Chevalier's ſtrange hiſtory, as Droſi had done before to that of Francoliſſe's. His ſtubborn ſpirit, like the other's, was not to be awed or ſubdued by tales of ghoſts, ſpirits, and ſupernatural agencies.—No, he was determined to puſh boldly forward, reſolved not only to take immediate poſſeſſion of his domains, but firmly to defend them, againſt all thoſe who preſumed to challenge his right of tenure.

Notwithſtanding, however, that the Chevalier's diſcourſe on this ſubject was more delicate and refined than that of Francoliſſe, ſtill the commentator, Carlo, was wanting. Had he been preſent at this conference, and obſerved firſt (with the learned ſignora Lauria, as he called her)—That IF there has been any *murder* committed at the Caſtle, in that caſe, the ringing of bells will keep the ſpirits away, &c. and then (as Carlo himſelf had afterwards obſerved, with ſuch critical diſcrimination)—is it not very probable, that ſome perſon in this old caſtle has been murdered at one time or another?—and ſo on. Theſe nice diſtinctions, proceeding from the very learned quarter they did,

might probably have faſtened themſelves on Rodolph.—But whether through guilt, conviction, or what not, time can only aſcertain.

The Count's reflections, however, on this myſterious tale, differed widely from thoſe of our ſagacious commentators. That the ringing of bells, at ſuch and ſuch particular hours—the ſounds of a diſtant and feeble voice, and other apparent ſtrange events, might be eaſily accounted for, and as eaſily diſcovered.

In the firſt place, he had all along ſuſpected the treachery of Goddard and Bernardine. He now conceived that they had, by ſome clandeſtine means, obtained a footing in the caſtle; but how, he could not poſſibly account for?

In the ſecond place—Rodolph reduced it to a certainty in his own mind, that they were the ſecret inhabitants of the fortreſs, and had been the joint authors of all theſe myſterious tranſactions, in order to alarm others from fixing their abode therein, and thereby to ſecure Prince Rinaldo's immenſe wealth, which he was certain they had embezzled for their own uſes and deſigns. And, laſtly, That they had diſcovered ſome ſecret channel that led to the North-tower, by which they contrived to ring the bell undiſcovered.—That they had, alſo, found ſome unknown paſſage that led into the chapel, by which they managed to re-illumine the tapers, when-

ever extinguiſhed. — In ſhort—Rodolph had no doubt, within himſelf, but that theſe fellows were incloſed in ſome ſecret or ſubterraneous part of the Caſtle, as he put all ſupernatural agency entirely out of the queſtion. Bernardine and Goddard, he knew, were poſſeſſed of natural courage and fortitude, and would retain their hold as long as they poſſibly could. He placed great hopes, however, on their extreme ignorance, which rendered them incapable of long carrying on a myſterious plot like this (that required a ſpirit more ſubtle and ingenious than their's) with much farther ſucceſs. They poſſeſſed, indeed, ſome little cunning, but of that low nature, as is continually betraying itſelf, and running into the very ſame trap that it had laid for others.—To conclude, Rodolph already began to ſee thoſe rebels in chains before him, and the prodigious ſtores of Prince Rinaldo diſcloſed to his eager view.

The Counteſs, on the other hand, was as much conſoled with the cheriſhing idea that Santa-Maria muſt be ſtill in exiſtence.—One reflexion, however, would forcibly ſtrike her,—that if her daughter was indeed alive, why had ſhe not ſent her ſome tidings of her being ſo? Again ſhe contemplated, with rapture, that the gift ſhe had beſtowed on the much to be regretted Lauria, was an intended token of her exiſtence.—Given to her with the

probability that it might, by ſome means, come acroſs her obſervation; or, why have reſerved this relic of her affection ſo long, and then diſpoſe of it, at the critical juncture of her arrival?—It muſt be ſo (conceived the Lady Iſabella) and tho' I deeply feel the affliction that her abſence muſt afford hereafter Signiora Lauria, ſtill I cannot refrain from indulging the fond idea of once more ſeeing my dearly beloved child again.

As for D'Arcos he had been invited to attend Rodolph to his Caſtle. This offer he now poſitively declined, fixed on ſharing the ſorrows of his beloved niece.—To his great grief, however, he ſoon began to perceive, that the ſorrows of Lauria did not burſt forth in torrents of diſtraction, but that a ſettled melancholy had taken poſſeſſion of her heart. From ſunriſe to ſun-ſet, did the anxious Francoliſſe ſearch after the fugitive minſtrel, but all in vain. The Chevalier ſought every means to ſoothe this melancholy of Lauria, but in vain alſo. On perceiving this, he afterwards ſought to indulge it, and would fondly attend his niece to the ſpot where ſhe firſt diſcovered Valentine; for grief often finds more conſolation by others participating in her woes, than fruitleſs exhortations to expel the canker that ſwells her convulſive boſom.

The more thou damm'ſt it up, the more it burns.
The current, that with gentle murmur glides,
Thou know'ſt, being ſtopt, impatiently doth rage.
SHAKSPEARE.

Lauria, indeed, would frequently obſerve, when her ſwoln eye caught a momentary glance of Hope 'the lover's ſtaff,'—"Oh! who can divine, thou beſt of men, and beſt of fathers, but my Florizel's paſt affection may, by chance, induce him to ſtray once more towards the ſpot where he firſt beheld thy moſt hapleſs child?"

CHAPTER XXIX.

Lonely, ſad along the heath he ſlowly moved with ſilent ſteps—his arms hang diſordered on his ſide—his hair flies looſe—The tear is in his downcaſt eyes, and the ſigh half ſilent in his breaſt.
OSSIAN.

Thou ſeeſt we are not all alone unhappy:
This wide and univerſal theatre
Preſents more woeful pageants, than the ſcene
Wherein we play. SHAKSPEARE.

NOW to proceed with Santa-Maria, in a long journey of freſh fortunes—reluctantly, indeed, have we been obliged, ever and anon, to hurry on, and leave her lagging behind, though ſtill, our eyes, with pleaſure, have been reverted, to gaze upon the ſtruggling—hapleſs traveller.—

The minſtrel, Valentine (for ſuch was the new-adopted name that he now gave himſelf—*himſelf* we ſay, ſtill keeping the diſguiſe, and not the ſex, in view)—after

the interview he had obtained with Lauria, provided himſelf with his lute, and ſome food, and then precipitately deſerted from the hoſpitable manſion of the Chevalier D'Arcos.

Uncertain, however, which road to purſue, and ignorant whither they led to, he wandered through the adjacent heaths and foreſts, and when night came on, laid himſelf down, beneath the ſheltering branches of a wide-ſpreading oak.—Here Valentine enjoyed his repoſe undiſturbed.—In the morning he continued his journey onward, and, towards the cloſe of noon, perceived a deep valley, into which he immediately deſcended—for, here, no doubt (bethought the poor fugitive) I can refreſh myſelf without being ſeen or annoyed—But, alas! his cup of miſery was not yet filled; for, ſcarce had he ſeated himſelf upon the graſs, when his ears were aſſailed with a long and mournful groan, that could not, from its original faintneſs, iſſue from any great diſtance.—The youth ſtarted up, and, claſping his forehead between his hands, he bitterly exclaimed—"Oh! God, when, and where will my misfortunes have an end?"—His heart, however, touched by the voice of diſtreſs, made him ſearch about to diſcover from whence the ſound had found its melancholy way.—He followed it cloſe as his ear could direct, which ſoon led

him to the mouth of a ſmall cave, apparently formed by art, at the bottom of a ſteep hill—With trembling ſteps, Valentine entered the gloomy abode—he had not far to proceed, for he ſoon diſcovered a wan and withered object ſtretched upon the cold ground.—For ſome time he ſtood enrapt in ſilent agony.—The expiring wretch, however, perceiving a ſtranger enter—again faintly exclaimed—"Alas! I die for want of food."—The minſtrel, on hearing this, ran back for his baſket of proviſion, which, in his diſmay, he had left behind, together with his lute. He ſoon brought them both into the cave, and then adminiſtered to the poor recluſe, every nouriſhment that his meat and wine could afford.—This ſeaſonable relief ſhortly relieved the gaſping—*miſerable wretch*; and, with the aſſiſtance of Valentine, he raiſed himſelf from his proſtrate ſituation.

In the mean time, the minſtrel had an opportunity of inſpecting this ſtrange receſs, and its baniſhed—wretched inhabitant.—At the further end of the cave, he diſcovered a broad and ſmooth plank of wood, raiſed upon four large ſtones, about three feet from the ground. In the centre, the earth had been ſhaped into a kind of dome and ſtrengthened by ſquare pieces of rock, in the middle of which, hung an iron lamp. Near the plank, were a ſtool and table, covered with a coarſe,

black cloth; and, close at hand, were some books, and several loose papers, together with a standish and pens, scattered upon an adjacent shelf.—As for the expiring wretch before him, he did not appear to be more than fifty, notwithstanding that disease and despair had made the most woeful ravages on his miserable carcase.—His face bore the decayed signs of a once manly beauty, and his eyes had still something commanding in their glimmering shootings, whilst his outward garb carried with it the habit of a—*Monk*.

This deserted being, perceiving the natural astonishment of his benevolent visitor, with visible anguish, exclaimed—"Alas! my young friend, had it not been for your timely aid, I should have left this world without any other expectation, but future—endless misery. Oppressed with despair and sickness, I have for a long—long week been stretched upon my pallet, without being able to seek my daily nourishment. Overcome, at last, by the cravings of nature, I attempted to go in search of food, when, in the feeble attempt, I fell upon the ground, where my groans must have reached your ears, and happily brought you to my assistance."

The minstrel, sensibly moved with the extreme wretchedness of this unhappy man, caught hold of his arm, and led him to the stool. Then seeing his eyes flow

with tears of gratitude; and perceiving that he was about attempting to expreſs his acknowledgments—he haſtily obſerved —" Peace, peace—have a little patience and comfort—do not deſpair—I will remain here in the valley, for a ſhort time, till, by my ſlender aſſiſtance, I may reſtore you to health, and to the world, I hope, alſo.—I have only this one favour, in return, to aſk—and this muſt be regarded—(continued Valentine, in a tone of the utmoſt ſolemnity) in the ſtricteſt and moſt religious ſenſe—*Queſtion me not about the ſtory of my life.*"—On this, the minſtrel ſeated himſelf on the edge of the pallet, and leaning his arms upon his knees, gave vent to the anguiſh which theſe laſt words had revived, in a flood of tears.

Valentine (as it has juſt been obſerved) when he firſt attentively ſurveyed the ſtranger, gueſſed him, by his habit, to have been a monk.—Conſcious, therefore, of the arbitrary ſway that moſt of theſe orders aſſumed over the conſciences of their fellow-creatures, and ever mindful of his oath at Bianca's cottage, " never to make known his ſex, till time had unravelled the myſtery that had firſt baniſhed him from his native home and friends"—he had taken the above early precaution, to forewarn the wretched recluſe from attempting to pry into the ſecrets of his ſoul.

Father Conrad (for a monk he really had been, and ſuch was he named) perceiv-

ing the minſtrel ſo diſconſolate, ſo young, and ſo beautiful withal, ſeated himſelf beſide him on the pallet, and taking him tenderly by the hand, he now became the phyſician inſtead of the patient, and endeavoured to calm the anguiſh of his preſerver's mind, in expreſſions ſo endearing, and ſo attempered with philoſophy and religion, that Valentine, ſtruck with his ſuperior ſenſe, piety, and engaging converſation, rouſed himſelf from the lethargy of deſpair and lamentation that had ſo ſuddenly overwhelmned him.

The Monk, diſcovering, with ſecret joy, that his exhortations had their deſired effect, he aroſe (conſiderably ſtrengthened) from his pallet, and ſtill continuing the Minſtrel's hand in his, he conducted him to a door that led to an inner apartment, fitted out in a manner that ſtill farther added to the ſurpriſe of Valentine. Our poor wanderer, who had no other roof to ſhelter his unprotected head, looked round him in ſilent meditation. He reviewed both the ſtranger and the place, over and over again, with the moſt deliberate circumſpection. From the Monk, he conceived no violence or cruel treatment could be expected; and, as to the receſs, from its conveniency and ſecrecy, he began ſeriouſly to think, that it might afford him a temporary and ſecure abode.

Father Conrad, reading his young friend's thoughts in his countenance (for well

could he ſcan the mind of man) and eager to give the earlieſt demonſtration of his gratitude, he immediately offered Valentine the apartment which he ſeemed to ſurvey with ſo much attention and ſatiſfaction, as a comfortable aſylum for him, till time ſhould alter the complexion of his fortunes. " Regard this chamber, therefore, my generous preſerver (continued the Monk, ſeeing that Valentine's looks ſpoke a thankful acquieſcence) as the reſting place of your preſent toils and misfortunes. No intruder can moleſt you here —and even myſelf ſhall not attempt to diſturb your privacy, without a paſſport previouſly given from under your own lips. What you have already commanded reſpecting the ſtory of your life, ſhall not only be rigidly adhered to on my part, but any other injunctions alſo, that you may hereafter think prudent to lay upon me.—In the mean time, I muſt beſeech you (for debility and ſickneſs prevent me from accompliſhing my daily wonted taſk, and which reduced me to the abject ſtate you found me in) to go into the meadow, that lies on the eaſt ſide of this receſs, and there you will ſoon perceive a net, where, no doubt, ſome birds have been entangled. A practice I have long made uſe of to ſupply me with my daily ſuſtenance. The Minſtrel, immediately conſented to go, and ſprung out with a ſudden flow of cheerfulneſs, as gave him a kind of flattering

preſentiment, that in his chance friend and abode he ſhould find that content and peace of mind, to which he had been almoſt a ſtranger for theſe four years paſt.

CHAPTER XXX.

Ne is there hawk, which mantleth on her pearch,
Whether high towring or accouſtring low:
But I the meaſure of his flight do ſearch,
And all her prey, and all her diet know.—SPENCER.

——————————in his forehead ſits
A bare ribb'd death. SHAKSPEARE.

VALENTINE had not proceeded far, before he obſerved the net. It was about twelve yards and a half long, and two yards or ſo wide. He for ſome time ſurveyed the ingenuity of this piece of workmanſhip with pleaſure and ſurpriſe. "This ſtranger (conceived he) muſt be a man of great genius and wiſdom—I ſhould now wiſh to hear the ſtory of his misfortunes; but as I have enjoined ſo rigid a ſilence myſelf on that ſubject, I cannot think of aſking him. Let me, however, conſider myſelf for the preſent, ſo far fortunate as to have met with an abode where ſecreſy precludes curioſity, and where love can no longer intrude itſelf on indifference."

On this reflection, which cheered and encouraged his heart, Valentine proceeded to examine the net. He found therein ſeveral birds, ſome dead, others alive.—The flur-birds were all dead, with their braces curiouſly turned round their bo-

dies. The long ſtring, however, being faſtened tightly to a tree, had entrapped the others by the violence of their jerks. Our young Falconer, perceiving the flur-birds to have been larks and pippets, expected that thoſe incloſed in the net were of the ſame kind. In this, he was not diſappointed, for they were nearly all larks, though but few pippets. What moſt of all, however, afforded him the greateſt pleaſure, was the ſight of a hawk, which, in attempting (as he ſuppoſed) to devour the larks, had been alſo entangled in the ſnare. On this diſcovery, he ſeized the bird by his wings, and faſtened them underneath, with a kerchief that he had in his doublet, and which happily on that occaſion, anſwered every purpoſe of a brace.

Whilſt Valentine had gone in ſearch of his game, Father Conrad, who found himſelf conſiderably relieved by the proviſions he had been aſſiſted to by his young tenant, kindled a fire in his new apartment, not at all doubting but that he would return with abundance of birds. In this he was not diſappointed, for our Falconer, with the utmoſt cheerfulneſs pictured on his blooming countenance, entered ſoon after with his prey. Valentine placed them all on the table, and exhibiting his hawk, with a ſmile of the moſt ſenſible ſatisfaction, exclaimed—"Now, father, you ſhall no longer be in requeſt of food,

whilſt I have this hawk in my poſſeſſion, with powers and health alſo to manage him. Inſtead of larks, and other ſmall birds, we will now ſhortly procure a ſufficiency of wild fowl to ſoften and indulge the cravings of nature.

If the Monk was pleaſed at this expreſſive cheerfulneſs of his young inmate, he was alſo equally overjoyed with the valuable acquiſition of his new friend. At the thoughts of his recreative companion, Valentine, for the preſent, not only forgot all his paſt ſorrows and misfortunes, but thoſe alſo that the abandoned Lauria muſt experience at theſe very moments for his cruel and myſterious abſence. Without taking farther notice, however, of any other immediate ſubject but his hawk, he laid hold of a leathern thong that lay upon the table (part of the Monk's paraphernalia of his order) and taking a knife from his doublet, cut a leaſe for his favourite bird. He then formed the jeſſes to his legs, and alſo cutting a thin ſtripe of leather, he faſtened it to the leaſe, which formed his diſciplinary creance. Our Falconer having proceeded thus far (to the ſurprize and pleaſure of Father Conrad) he begged to have a part of the coarſe black cloth that ſerved as a covering to his ſtool; which being cheerfully aſſented to, he immediately brought it forth, and ſtraight cut a ruſter-hood for his hawk.—He then cut another thin ſtripe from the

leathern thong, and ſhaped the ſtring to unſtrike the hood. Valentine, on this, diſcovering the bird begin to bate, obſerved, "that it might now go to jouk, for I cannot (ſaid he) in tenderneſs' ſake, ſeal the poor creature."

Our eager ſportſman having diſpoſed of the hawk in one corner of his own apartment, ſat down with great cheerfulneſs to ſupper, whilſt the Monk, equally gratified by the good humour and good ſenſe of his companion, experienced a renovating pleaſure ſwell throughout his whole frame as he had not felt for ſome time before. To their game was added a flagon of freſh wine, which the Father had brought from a cloſet in the next room. Their repaſt being concluded, Conrad began to interrogate Valentine reſpecting his firſt knowledge of falconry; when the latter immediately ſilenced his curioſity, by reminding the other of the ſolemn injunctions he had laid on this ſubject at their interview. He, however, took this opportunity of delicately hinting, that no ſuch particular ſtreſs had been lain upon himſelf.

"In conformity, my amiable inmate (replied the Monk) to this your firſt ſacred requeſt, my lips hereafter ſhall never be opened to treſpaſs again. A mutual confidence might be as diſtreſſing to you, as it would be *horribly* ſo to me. Indeed, youth, if I was inclined to tell the ſad ſtory that firſt brought me to this place,

my conſumptive powers would not ſuffer me to do ſo, without haſtening the diſſolution which I feel creeping through my chilly veins. It is already inſcribed on the ſable book of fate for the view and example of poſterity; if chance ſuffers it to burſt forth like a peſtilence upon the world—no more, however, of this—I have ſaid enough. As I perceive, nevertheleſs (continued the Father) that your curioſity has been excited about this ſolitary receſs, I can with propriety, and far more ſatisfaction, give you a brief ſketch of its preſent modelled appearance. A trifling ſketch, indeed—but one that will enleſſon the induſtry and ſkill of degenerate man, when drove to the extreme bounds of neceſſity and deſpair.

CHAPTER XXXI.

Oh! I have done thoſe things
That now give evidence againſt my ſoul.

SHAKSPEARE.

"IT is now above three years (ſaid Father Conrad) ſince I firſt came to this ſolitary vale—a villain in my own mind, and an outcaſt of mankind."—Perceiving Valentine change countenance, at this unfavourable confeſſion—the Monk pauſed a few moments, and then recollecting himſelf, thus proceeded:—

"Hither then, ſuffice it to ſay, I ſtray-

ed, and deſcending into this recluſe glen, diſcovered a ſhelter, which I have every reaſon to believe, had been formerly the abode of wolves, as I found ſeveral bones of ſome ſuch animals ſcattered about the ground.—Fearful leſt any more ſhould return, I continually kept up a large fire, and in a few days afterwards, obſerving that the earth was of a clayey ſubſtance, and that the heat had conſiderably hardened it, I inſtantly formed the idea of making this ſecret ſpot the future place of my retirement.

The more completely to effect my purpoſe, I left it for a few days, and repairing to the village of St. Biagio, which lies ſouthward of the glen; I purchaſed the implements and conveniencies neceſſary for my undertaking. On my return, I began by unwearied application to accompliſh the deſign, and found every thing agree with my utmoſt wiſhes. After ſome weeks of inceſſant labour, I at length completed the outer room as it now ſtands.—The adjacent foreſts furniſhing plenty of wood, I had every means alſo of making the tables, ſtools, and other neceſſaries, that the receſs is at preſent ſo comfortably provided with. After concluding my firſt attempt, I found my mind and body grow relaxed, for want of that uſual employ and exerciſe which had for ſome time ſo happily relieved me from the anxiety of reflection.—Thinking on this ſame occa-

ſion, that ſome unfortunate ſtranger, or bewildered traveller, might one day ſtray towards my receſs; I ſoon after began to found the apartment you are now to poſſeſs. Having learnt a great deal from my former experience, I improved upon my former plan, and rendered this chamber more compact and regular than the other. The ſucceſſive works of labour were not completed, till a year and more after my firſt ſojourning on this ſpot. Having thus inured my body by induſtry, I then reſolved to ſet me down in reſt, and ſtrengthen my mind for a future ſtate.—In ſhort, ſince that, I have arranged every worldly concern (ſave one) and endeavoured by faſting, prayer, and repentance, to prepare my ſoul for a favourable reception in the other world—a world, awful indeed for me to think upon, and which I ſhould have entered before now, whither forgiven or condemned, had it not been for your unexpected and charitable aſſiſtance."

Father Conrad, perceiving the night ſteal on apace, roſe, and prepared to bid Valentine a good repoſe.—But on a ſudden, a ſtart of recollection, delayed him a few moments longer.—He now re-approached our minſtrel, and thus addreſſed him in the moſt ſolemn and moſt energetic manner, both of countenance and voice:

"Before I depart, allow me to lay this inhibition on you—You have already en-

joined me, my moſt amiable youth, not to interrogate you concerning the hiſtory of your life.—Let me, therefore, enjoin *you*, during your abode in this inner receſs—never—never, to draw aſide——thoſe black hangings you may ſee there, at the eaſtern part of the chamber. Your curioſity would then prove as hurtful to your feelings, as it has always been to me, when I have dared to gratify my own—I am not long for this world—a few—very few days indeed, will cut the thread of exiſtence.—I feel that this laſt ſhock will ſoon crumble me into my native duſt.—My vital powers are almoſt exhauſted.—I pray therefore, that you may remain here, until the expected awful period has taken place.—Then, and then only, you have my free grant to withdraw theſe ſable hangings.—And then, oh! youth, you will diſcover a treaſure, that may hereafter (together with the invaluable jewel of an untainted conſcience) render you ſuperior to the taunts of proſperity, and the gloomy ſcorns of adverſity.—Youth, good-night—have preſent reſolution to repel curioſity, and all ſtill may be happy with you." On this the Father retired to his own hard pallet, and left his inmate to enjoy the comforts of a ſoft and pleaſant mattreſs.

The monk being gone, Valentine ſtill kept his ſeat before the fire, to indulge a few moments' reflection on one day's more

adventures. His ideas ſoon began to float about in varied channels.—He looked towards the black hangings, and wondered deeply what they could conceal.—They appeared *both* of a coarſe ſubſtance, ſimilar to the habit the recluſe himſelf had on.—He ruminated on the expreſſions that prefaced his ſtory of the receſs.—A villain in my own mind, and an outcaſt of human nature.——Surely (conceived Valentine) I can have nothing to apprehend?—His manners, ſenſe, ingenuity, and complacency of countenance, do not convey the appearance of danger in them;—his humanity, moreover, and benevolent foreſight, in providing this ſecret and convenient ſhelter for the *unhappy ſtranger* or *bewildered traveller*, denote a charitable beneficence of mind, that could not harbour danger alſo!—I ſee no inſtruments of lurking miſchief any where about.—What, however, can the myſtery attached to thoſe coarſe ſable hangings diſcloſe?—A treaſure (ſays the father)—his meaning cannot ſurely be otherwiſe fairly conſtrued into any words, than what he himſelf expreſſed.—But if it is a treaſure, why then give it ſuch a melancholy and forbidding ſhelter?—Is it not, however, prudent, and conducive for my ſafety, to break through this monk's beheſts, and will not my preſent precarious ſituation excuſe my curioſity?—But then again, will not this ſame breach of faith, betray a meanneſs,

and an abuſe alſo of his confidence and hoſpitality?—moſt certainly it will. Then I will alſo repreſs my anxieties, and not attempt to violate the ſolemn injunctions he has laid upon me."

Valentine thus reſolved, and ſeeing his lute at hand, which the monk had carefully placed there, he took it up, and accompanying the inſtrument with his voice, chaunted in doleful ſtrains, the unhappy loves of the fair Roſaline, and the beauteous Lauria.

The ſolemnity of the hour, and the expreſſive melancholy of the lute, had ſuch an effect upon the poor Father, in the adjoining chamber, that Valentine heard him diſtinctly exclaim—"Such are the ſounds that ſuit 'the gloomy horrors of my ſoul."

The minſtrel on diſcovering this, immediately ceaſed playing, and putting down his lute in the ſame corner of the receſs, where he had perched his hawk, he lay down upon his mattreſs; when

——"Sleep that ſometimes ſhuts up ſorrow's eye,"

ſoon overpowered, and locked him in the arms of ſweet oblivion.

CHAPTER XXXII.

——————— Tremble, thou wretch,
That haſt within thee undivulged crimes,
Unwhipt of juſtice.—Hide thee, thou bloody hand,
Thou perjure, and thou ſimular of virtue;
Thou art *inceſtuous*; caitiff, ſhake to pieces.

SHAKSPEARE.

VALENTINE roſe with the ſun, and looking after his hawk, gave him a lark-gorge, and ſetting out to the meadow that was the leaſt encumbered with trees or wood, commenced his firſt morning's training. The minſtrel was a moſt excellent falconer, he therefore ſet about manning and reclaiming his bird, in the peculiar manner he had been taught by the love-ſick Roſaline's father. His practices and obſervances had ſoon their deſired effect. The hawk every morning, became more than extraordinarily early attached to his young tutor; and Valentine finding him to be a ſtately high-flyer, brought him up to the river.—A manner of training that not only ſuited beſt to the ſituation of the country, but to the ſhort periods of the morning, that he could ſtray from the glen, and prudently appropriate to his favourite recreation.

The game, however, that Valentine acquired through the activity of his bird, had no other effect on father Conrad, than what aroſe from gratitude.—He had found himſelf decaying day after day, from the minſtrel's firſt arrival. The melody, in-

deed, of his lute, which he never failed to indulge him with, cheered his drooping ſpirits, and elevated his meditations, with encreaſed awe, to approaching ſcenes of an awful eternity. Nature at length, after a month's ſevere ſtruggle—wearied and decayed—the monk gave up the ghoſt. —And Valentine found himſelf alone, in a dreary receſs, which nothing but a ſecond being could enliven—aſſociated alſo with a miſerable corpſe;—intereſted likewiſe in a ſecret, which his honour and faith, at firſt denied him to ſeek into, and which his fears now diſſuaded him from attempting to diſcover—a ſecret, that had been particularly enjoined by the monk, in his laſt moments, immediately to ſatisfy himſelf with; as on that, and that alone, his own future happineſs and proſperity depended.

Great were the ſtruggles of Valentine's mind on this mournful occaſion. He wiſhed, indeed, that both his own innocent curioſity, and the laſt dying bequeſts of Father Conrad ſhould be ſatisfied and performed. On the eve, therefore, of his deceaſe, the ſolitary exile took the lamp from the dead man's room; and with all the reſolution he could collect, entered the inner receſs; for, in the other, he could not abide the paſſing of a ſecond. Several times was Valentine determined to fly from the ſpot, and abandon the ſecret to ſome future ſtranger. Then, on the

other hand, to diſobey the laſt ſolemn prayers of a poor departed being, compelled him to reſiſt the uncharitable idea. Thus wavering, he tremblingly approached the hanging neareſt the door. He heſitated, and ſhook with horror. At laſt, he ventured to draw it one ſide, and diſcovered———a coffin, ſtanding upright, covered with the ſame coarſe black ſtuff that compoſed the hanging under which it lay concealed. For four years (as it has already appeared) Valentine had been nurſed in the lap of miſery and ſorrow. This was a ſpectacle, therefore, that did not ſo much diſturb his fortitude. It was a mere and neceſſary apparatus of death; and, as ſuch, he ſoon reconciled the ſight of it to his feelings. On the lining was faſtened a paper. This, however, he was determined at all events not to remove, without ſearching for ſome witneſs. He was alſo reſolved not to draw aſide the other hanging, which ran parallel with the firſt; for the words, "I am a villain in my own mind, and the outcaſt of human nature," came freſh acroſs his memory.—Behind the other, as he conceived, might remain—not a coffin—but ſome mouldering-—murdered corpſe.——This ſuppoſition he was led into by an offenſive ſmell that had often iſſued from that quarter, as he paſſed by it.—Poſſeſſed, therefore, of ſufficient fortitude, to abandon the receſs, he took his lute, and haſ-

tily quitting the dreary abode of death, flew to the ſide of an adjacent hill, that he knew led towards the great road to Meſſina; not with the intent, however, of wholly abandoning the receſs, but to endeavour by his melody, to attract ſome wandering ſtranger, or chance travellet, who not only could be a joint teſtimony of this myſterious hiſtory, but who could, with more reſolution, perform thoſe ceremonies to the dead, which he knew himſelf incapable of going ſingly through.

Here Valentine acted equally with great prudence and circumſpection; for he well knew that if the ſevere and ſcrutinizing eye of the Neapolitan law ſhould ever by chance, or what not, gain an inſight into this dark buſineſs, that a court of inquiſition might arraign his conduct, and himſelf be ultimately perſecuted for what he was innocent of—being reſolutely determined (as he was) even if death ſhould be the conſequence, never to violate the ſolemn oath he had made at Bianca's cottage, —viz.—to reveal the ſecret of his ſex or birth, till the myſtery of the pregnancy ſhould be elucidated—And

" His words were bonds, his oaths were oracles,"

11 MA 59

END OF THE FIRST VOLUME.